

Ibos fail Jewish test

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel's Supreme Court has rejected an appeal to consider the Ibo tribe of Nigeria as Jews, which would have opened the door for the community of two million to emigrate. James Edwards Oniolo from the West African state claimed that the Ibos were descendants of the lost tribe of Ephraim, one of the 10 tribes scattered throughout the world after the fall of the first temple in Jerusalem in the 6th century B.C. Oniolo found several parallels between the Ibo religion and Judaism, noting monotheism, male circumcision and dietary laws. However, the court ruled against the Ibo on Thursday and in support of the interior ministry which refused to grant Oniolo the right of return to Israel as a Jew. Oniolo arrived in Israel six years ago and married a Jewish woman which gives him the right to live in Israel. Israel automatically grants citizenship and a host of benefits to any Jew and close relatives who emigrate to the state — some 70,000 immigrants have arrived this year, most from the former Soviet Union.

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Majali: Jordan will continue custodianship over Jerusalem

'OIC resolutions did not deny Jordan's role'

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

The prime minister, Dr. Abdul Salam Majali, announced yesterday that Jordan would continue its trusteeship of Jerusalem's holy shrines as there was nothing in the Organisation of Islamic Conference's resolution concerning the city to exclude this role.

Speaking at a press conference several hours after his return from Casablanca, Dr. Majali said that, in any case, the summit conference "was not a court of law that could decide to whom the trusteeship goes." The pertinent resolutions, the prime minister stressed, said nothing for Jordan's guardianship of the shrines, it is true.

"At the same time it said nothing against our trusteeship," he added, explaining that the reservation Jordan expressed over the resolution stemmed from the fact that the summit did not recognise Jordan's special tie to the holy places.

Dr. Majali said that the Muslim countries are to meet in January to try to resolve the dispute over the holy city. Dr. Majali said the meeting of the Al Quds Committee, chaired by King Hassan II of Morocco would also include Egypt.

"It will meet in mid-January to debate the issue of Jerusalem," he said, adding the discussions would "look at the problem of the guardianship of the city's holy Muslim sites and issues connected to the holy city."

Dr. Majali reiterated His Majesty King Hussein's pledge at the summit that Jordan would not give up its trusteeship of the shrines at the moment since that would open the way for Israel to assume responsibility for them.

For this reason, Jordan registered its reservation, but not objection, over the Casablanca resolutions concerning the holy city, Dr. Majali said.

Jordan's care for the holy shrines in Jerusalem had never been a problem to any one or raised by any party, he said reiterating that the trusteeship would only last until the Palestinians have completed their negotiations for the final restoration of their sovereignty over the Arab city.

It seemed that Jordan's position regarding Jerusalem had not been clear enough for some parties who had thought that Jordan intended to impose its control over Jerusalem and the holy places and to deprive the Palestinian people of their own lawful and legitimate rights, the prime minister noted.

Dr. Majali said that some parties had thought that "we were suggesting something new but the reality is that there is nothing new in this whole issue since Jordan has been caring for the holy places even before the 1967 occupation and afterwards and after the 1988 severance of the legal and administrative ties with the West Bank."

Dr. Majali said that everyone is waiting for the Palestinians to enter into final status negotiations with Israel over the issue of Jerusalem to regain their rights and sovereignty over the city.

Dr. Majali noted that no one at the summit had denied Jordan the right of trusteeship over the holy places nor had any party made any remarks against this trusteeship. What was frustrating, he said, was the fact that the resolution was void of any mention of Jordan's role.

In his address to the summit Wednesday King Hussein said that as a Hashemite and Jordanian "I would like to stress that the shrines are a trust in our hands as we have rescued them with the blood of our sons in the 1948 war and we have constructed them three times on behalf of the Islamic nation."

Asked on whether there was neglect or shortcomings on the part of the government in fully explaining Jordan's stand vis-a-vis Jerusalem, Dr. Majali said that there was no negligence in this matter, as we have explained our position clearly on many occasions.

The PLO, supported by Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Egypt, wanted the OIC to name an Islamic committee to look after the holy shrines until the Palestinian Authority recovers the area in negotiations with Israel, an Arab official at the summit told AFP requesting anonymity.

The PLO fears that the recognition many undermine its claim to have east Jerusalem as the capital of a future state — an issue to be settled in a later phase of negotiations with Israel.

But Dr. Majali sought Friday to defuse the row saying only that there were "divergences" over Jerusalem.

"Jordan is not opposed to the resolution on Jerusalem but we think that our role has been neglected while that of Saudi Arabia had been recognised."

"Jordan has no desire for hegemony over this city. We are the trustees until Palestinian autonomy is extended and our role is not political," he added.

The Al-Quds committee, set up by the OIC in May 1979 after the signing of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, is composed of 15 foreign ministers and was entrusted with drawing up a programme "to liberate Jerusalem" after Israel invaded the Arab eastern sector in 1967.

The prime minister said that he was satisfied with contacts with other Arab states at the summit and that Jordan had hoped that the occasion would be a good opportunity for reconciliation.

Dr. Majali said that King Hussein had cordial meetings with a number of heads of delegations including PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and the Kuwaiti foreign minister. The Prime Minister, for his part, met Sheikh Zayed Al Nahyan, and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal.



The prime minister, Dr. Abdul Salam Majali at the press conference at the Prime Ministry yesterday (Petra photo)



KING RETURNS: His Majesty King Hussein Conference (OIC's) summit which concluded Friday returned home after heading the Jordanian delegation to the Organisation of Islamic

Jihad leader arrested in Egypt

CAIRO (Agencies) — Police have arrested a leader of an armed Muslim militant group wanted for planning attacks on senior officials from the interior ministry, the daily Al-Ahram said Friday.

Amer Ibrahim, a 35-year-old civil servant, was arrested in Santa in the southern Egyptian Bani-Sewef province 125 kilometres south of Cairo.

Other militants from the Jihad group were also arrested, the paper added.

The last attack blamed on the Jihad was in February when the main witness in the trial into the attempted assassination of Prime Minister Atef Sedki was killed north of Cairo.

Egyptian authorities have said they have "wiped out" the Jihad and "foiled all its attacks."

Meanwhile Egyptian prosecution referred 20 Muslim militants to court on charges of belonging to a "terrorist" group bent on destabilising the country and overthrowing the government, prosecution sources said Friday.

The prosecution said in a statement the young men belonged to "a secretive and illegal organisation" aiming at suspending constitutional laws, damaging the country's security, ousting the government, charging the ruler with infidelity and preaching for his disobedience.

The men were also accused of possessing illegal arms, forging identification papers, robbing jewellery and electronic shops and selling their gains to finance their group.

They would be tried in a high state emergency court with the exception of two who were referred to a normal court because they were under the age of 17.

"Terror and violence were the tools used in implementing their objectives which endangered the lives of people," the prosecution said.

The sources said the militants belonged to the Jihad (holy war) group which is seeking to topple the regime and establish an Islamic state in Egypt by carrying out attacks against senior officials and by trying to infiltrate the army ranks.

The suspects, arrested three months ago, were all from the Ismailia province, east of Cairo. They were running a training camp in a desert area in Ismailia where they learned how to shoot and make bombs.

Three of the suspects are still on the run, they said.

The Jihad is a revival of the group that assassinated President Anwar Sadat during a military parade in 1981.

It has claimed responsibility for many assassination attacks against high-ranking security officials and ministers, including the interior, information and prime minister in 1993. The ministers escaped the attacks.

Hamas, PNA reconciliation talks stall

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AFP) — Joint talks between the Palestinian Authority and the opposition Hamas group set up to defuse tension after clashes in Gaza left 13 dead have stalled, a Hamas leader said Friday.

"We announce that the committee has reached a dead-end," said Mahmoud Zahhar.

The committee was set up by the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas and the Palestinian Authority earlier in December after Hamas supporters and Palestinian police clashed in the autonomous Strip in November.

One of the committee's aims was to form a fact-finding commission to investigate the November clash in which 200 people were also wounded.

"We place the responsibility for the committee's failure on the (Palestinian) government," Mr. Zahhar said at a rally held to celebrate the seventh anniversary of the creation of Hamas.

A statement issued later by the group said the committee was not dissolved, but had "slowed down" its work.

"We still respect the agreement," it said, referring to an agreement worked out with the Palestinian Authority which included a ban on arms and abusive language at rallies.

"We call on (Ahmed) Tibi and (Ahmed) Nimr Darwish to continue their active efforts to solve this problem," the statement said.

Messrs. Tibi and Darwish are Israeli-Arabs on the committee who have acted as mediators.

Another Hamas leader, Imad Faluji, said the authority had suddenly announced its representatives who came only from the PLO leader Yasser Arafat's main Fatah faction.

"This means the authority does not want to talk with us," Mr. Faluji said, accusing the self-rule authority of deliberately delaying setting up the fact-finding body.

"We have no problem with Fatah, our conflict is with the Palestinian Authority," he said, adding the committee last met about a week ago.

Arafat proposes gradual Israeli troop withdrawal

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — PLO leader Yasser Arafat has proposed a gradual withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank beginning in cities with no Jewish settlers, Israeli and Palestinian officials said on Friday.

The officials, who did not want to be named, said he made the proposal during talks this week with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in Stockholm. Mr. Peres said Israel would consider the matter.

The proposal calls for Israel to withdraw initially from Jenin and Bethlehem, West Bank cities separated from Israeli settlements.

The withdrawal would be followed by negotiations for a redeployment throughout the West Bank and Palestinian elections.

More than 100,000 Jewish settlers live among two million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In some cases, settlers live in or next to Arab towns.

As part of the Israeli-PLO interim agreement, Israel handed over to Palestinian control most of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho last May.

Islamic militants, opposed to the self-rule agreement, have launched a series of deadly attacks against Israelis.

Israelis and Palestinians negotiating the next stage of the agreement in Cairo this week said more time was needed to clinch a deal.

Meanwhile senior PLO members are urging Mr. Arafat to refuse to hold Palesti-

Ekeus: Iraq still hiding crucial data

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Iraq is still hiding information on its past weapons programmes by failing to declare equipment and materials until confronted with evidence to the contrary, says a U.N. report obtained Friday.

The report by Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the U.N. special commission in charge of Iraqi disarmament, is a half-year summary of its work and is due to be presented to the Security Council Monday.

While Iraq was praised for cooperating in a crucial long-term monitoring programme, the report said missing data, particularly on biological weapons, was pervasive.

"In general, in relation to the past programmes, Iraq has not volunteered information and has shown a marked lack of transparency, disclosing information only when confronted with evidence by the commission," the report said.

"In many instances, new information obtained by the commission contradicted the accounts given by Iraq."

A prime example, the commission said, was a high-precision tracking radar which Iraq said had not been used for the type of ballistic missiles banned by the Security Council.

After 14 months of talks and investigations, the commission said it now had "overwhelming evidence" the radar could be used for forbidden missile programmes, despite more than a year of denials from Iraq. The mobile radar station had been imported from China years ago, sources at the U.N. said.

But the main problem was in the area of biological weapons programmes of research where the commission said it faced its greatest difficulties in obtaining past information.

"While Iraq maintains that the programme was in the early research stages and would be defensively oriented, the indications all point to an offensive programme," Mr. Ekeus said.

About a week ago, the U.N. sources said inspectors had discovered small quantities of research materials or "growth media" for cholera, tuberculosis and the plague, which had not been declared previously. The materials have been destroyed, with samples sent to various laboratories, including one in the United States, for analysis.

Berlusconi calls opponents swindlers

ROME (R) — Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, whose seven-month-old coalition could be toppled by a parliamentary vote next week, Friday branded moves to unseat him a swindle.

Mr. Berlusconi attacked what he said was an attempt to cheat the electorate as Umberto Bossi, leader of the Northern League Coalition Party, claimed to have the support in parliament to bring down the government and form a new ruling alliance.

"It's a big swindle, a swindle at the expense of the electors and on the back of the country," Mr. Berlusconi told Panorama Magazine when asked about league moves to form an alliance with leftist and centrist opposition parties.

Billionaire businessman Berlusconi will seek what amounts to a vote of confidence in his five-party coalition when he addresses parliament next Wednesday. If the prime minister loses, he would be duty-bound to resign.

Mr. Bossi's Federalist League is one of the three main coalition partners. But its outspoken leader repeated in an interview published in several newspapers Friday that he thought Mr. Berlusconi had reached the end of the line.

"There are two ways out of this political situation. Either we have a government without Berlusconi or there are fresh elections," Mr. Bossi said.

But there won't be elections because there is already a majority opposed to Berlusconi in the chamber of deputies (lower house), added Mr. Bossi, who said he had the backing of 325 members of the 630-seat chamber.

Mr. Bossi claimed to have the support of the Democra-

Mitterrand denies he has 'six months to live'

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, France (R) — French President Francois Mitterrand denied Friday telling a philosopher that his doctors had informed him he had just six months to live.

"My doctors have never told me that, and I don't expect such a quick ending," Mr. Mitterrand, who is suffering from prostate cancer, told reporters.

Mr. Mitterrand, 78, was speaking at a news conference at the close of a day-long Franco-Italian summit.

Philosopher Jean Guilton, 93, had said Friday that Mr. Mitterrand confided to him last month that doctors reckoned he had no more than six months to live.

Mr. Mitterrand, who is due to step down as president in May after 14 years as head of state, visited him at his Paris home Nov. 17 to discuss the afterlife.

In an interview with RMC Radio, Mr. Guilton quoted Mr. Mitterrand as telling him: "I have a fatal illness, and the doctors looking after me, in particular my main doctor, say that I cannot live more than six months."

Socialist Mitterrand, 78, has said that he wants to serve out his term despite painful treatment for cancer, but has not publicly disclosed when doctors fear he might die.

The Elysee presidential palace had no comment on Mr. Guilton's remarks.

Mr. Mitterrand has slimmed down his public appearances and has appeared increasingly after a second operation, during the summer, for prostate cancer.

On Friday, he met Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi in the southern French town of Aix-en-Provence.

Conservative French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur is the favourite to win the April 23-May 7 presidential election after



Francois Mitterrand

Hawaiian jet returns after smoke fills cabin

AP

Islamic leaders differ on host of issues

CASABLANCA, Morocco (Agencies) — Islamic leaders Thursday urged military aid for Bosnia's embattled Muslims and vowed to combat religious fanaticism which has destabilised their nations.

But appeals for greater Muslim unity were undercut by rifts among Arab participants that remained unresolved at the close of a three-day summit of the 52-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

King Hussein, the Arab World's longest-reigning leader, quit the summit Wednesday, apparently because of a feud with the Palestinians who accuse Jordan of making deals with Israel that could undercut their claim to sovereignty over Jerusalem.

One of the summit's goals was to end feuds that have plagued the Arab World since Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, polarising the region into pro- and anti-Iraqi camps.

The host Moroccan government lamented the failure of the reconciliation effort. It regretted that "one OIC member was unhappy," alluding to King Hussein's early departure and Jordan's reservations over the Jerusalem resolution (see page 2).

"Despite all the goodwill efforts, we regrettably found that the Gulf war has left an open wound which has to be healed," said Morocco's King Hassan II.

"It is time to let bygones be bygones; it is time for forgiveness," he said of the failure to bring the Iraqis together with Kuwaiti and Saudi Arabian delegations.

Despite the disputes, participants agreed on a 182-article communiqué on issues ranging from terrorism in the Islamic World to technology and culture. They agreed to hold the next Islamic summit in Tehran, Iran, in December 1997.

A separate, six-page document — the Casablanca Declaration — complained about "a ferocious campaign to tarnish Islam," denounced "extremism and religious fanaticism" and called for an organised media effort to "rectify misconceptions" that have made Islam synonymous with violence.

It condemned terrorism as "a blatant disgrace to Islamic teachings and a violation of our values, culture and heritage." It pledged "sincere cooperation" with international anti-terrorism efforts, without "infringing on the legitimate right of national resistance to occupation."

The plight of Bosnian Muslims was a unifying issue for the leaders who came from far-flung countries in Europe, Asia and Africa.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic attended as an observer, and his government received pledges of between \$300,000 to \$5 million from each Islamic state.

The Bosnia resolution went beyond the expected call to lift the arms embargo that favours the better-equipped Bosnian Serbs.

The Islamic states said they would cooperate with any U.N. members "who exhibit a willingness on their own initiative to provide Bosnia with the means for self defence."

They renewed a call to reinforce U.N. peacekeepers with Muslim troops, a suggestion rejected by Western countries which fear it could allow fundamentalist countries like Iran to gain a foothold in Europe.

The Islamic leaders called for streamlining procedures to allow "immediate military support," including air strikes by NATO, to protect peacekeepers and civilians against Serb attacks.

They also sought cooperation between their "contact group" on Bosnia and the contact group of the United States, Russia, France, Britain and Germany.

The resolutions on the Middle East made no mention of the boycott of Israel, which Islamic states had pledged to honour until the settlement of the conflict.

The document praised progress in Arab-Israeli peace talks. But it did not mention the Palestinian self-rule accord or the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, apparently to avoid a veto from Syria which had denounced the separate deals.

Iraq, angered over a resolution entitled "Iraqi aggression against Kuwait," won a minor victory with the deletion of a sentence on implementing U.N. Security

Council resolutions regarding "the elimination of weapons of mass destruction."

The resolution still called for Iraq to comply with U.N. resolutions and refrain from menacing its neighbours.

Jordan failed to gain a mention in the final document on Jordan's role in overseeing Muslim holy sites in Arab East Jerusalem.

Palestinians objected out of fear it would weaken their claim to sovereignty over that sector of the city holy to Christians, Muslims and Jews.

The 184-point summit resolution also dealt with the conflicts in Afghanistan, Kashmir and Somalia as well as the international embargo on Libya.

A declaration on Kashmir, where Muslim separatists are in rebellion against Indian rule, called for a peaceful and political solution based on U.N. resolutions. It also urged dialogue between India and Pakistan.

Abdul Quayyum Khan, prime minister of the Pakistani sector of Kashmir, welcomed the resolution and thanked the Indian government for allowing two separatist leaders from the Indian-held two-thirds of Kashmir to attend the Casablanca summit.

On Afghanistan, the summit document expressed deep concern "over the fratricidal conflict" and urged the Afghan leadership to spare no effort to bring hostilities to an immediate end.

An Afghan delegate said the warring Afghan factions failed to agree a ceasefire during OIC-sponsored talks in Tehran before the summit. "More talks are needed," he said.

The summit resolutions were adopted unanimously with only Jordan and Iraq expressing reservations.

Sudan: OIC summit a failure

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan leader General Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Beshir Friday slammed the just-concluded Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Casablanca as a failure.

The summit has "failed" to achieve "fraternity among Arab states whose differences flared once again during the meetings of the OIC," Gen. Beshir said in a statement on his return here.

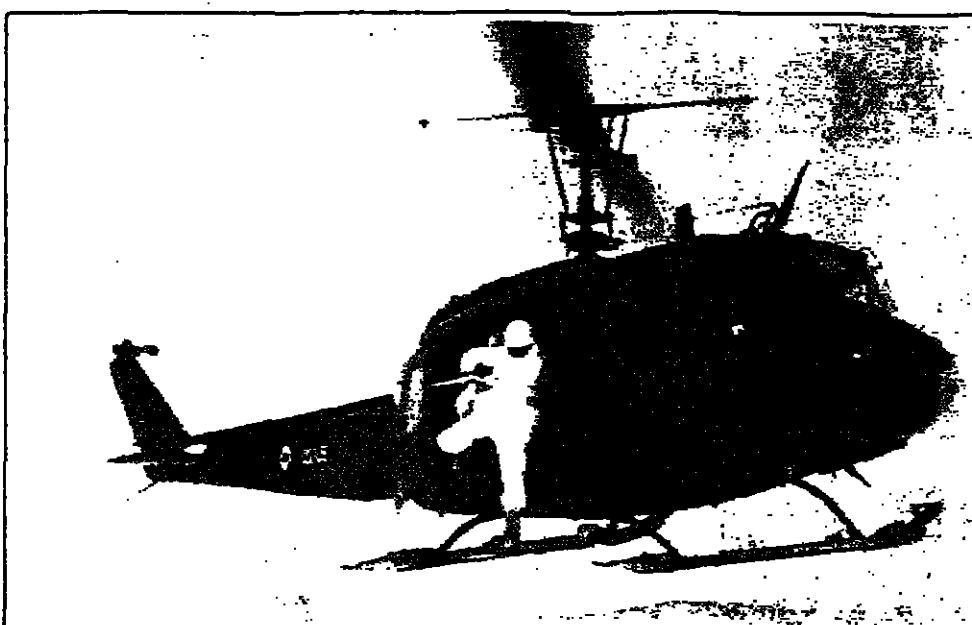
In another development, Beshir said Nigeria would play a role in reactivating efforts to reach peace in southern Sudan.

Gen. Beshir who met with Nigeria's head of state, General Sani Abacha, told reporters that the Nigerian leaders have expressed readiness to reactivate the peace efforts in the Sudan.

Nigeria has previously hosted two rounds of peace talks between the Sudanese government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

But after Sani Abacha took over from General Ibrahim Babangida, the peace efforts moved to Kenya where President Daniel Arap Moi is leading a four-member committee that includes the heads of state of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda.

The Organisation of the Islamic Conference summit regrouped 51 countries.



TURKEY'S WAR GAMES: A Turkish soldier in snow-cumouflage jumps out of an Army helicopter against fighters of the outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). The military action in the Turkish-Iranian border region near Mount Ararat Thursday, as some 30,000 troops aimed at cutting PKK forces from escape routes to nearby Iranian territory (AFP photo)

Illiteracy rising in Iraq as U.N. sanctions bite

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Poverty exacerbated by U.N. sanctions is driving many children in Iraq to quit school and seek work, pushing up the rate of illiteracy, officials say here.

"Illiteracy is threatening society again," warned the weekly Al-Naba, calling for a serious public debate on the problem.

The government spent vast amounts of money on eradicating illiteracy from 1978 to 1987, targeting some 2.25 million people.

But the U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait seriously harmed the education ministry's programmes, a ministry official said.

The Iraqi press has given extensive coverage to reports of teenagers filling the streets, selling newspapers, cigarettes and sweets.

Nearly nine per cent of girls and six per cent of boys

in primary and intermediate schools stopped attending class in the 1993-1994 academic year. The ministry forecasts a higher rate in the current year.

Around five million children are enrolled in schools, making up nearly one-third of Iraq's 18 million inhabitants.

The situation is aggravated by the fact that primary education is compulsory in Iraq and parents who fail to send their children to school risk penalties going as far as imprisonment.

"The interruption of studies, mainly in intermediate schools, is spreading continuously," Education Minister Hikmat Al-Bazza told AFP.

"The phenomenon will worsen this year and include teachers, who have started leaving the profession in search of other jobs."

Civic organisations such as the General Union of Iraqi

Women are trying to improve the situation by organising special courses.

Union official Fadila Hmaid told the newspaper Al-Qadisiya that the organisation had enrolled more than 11,000 girls aged 10 and above who had been forced to leave school.

Last month Iraq recognised Kuwait's sovereignty and borders — a key condition for the lifting of sanctions.

But the U.N. Security Council renewed sanctions on Nov. 14.

Kuwait, backed by the United States and Britain, demands full Iraqi compliance with all U.N. resolutions relating to the August 1990-February 1991 Gulf crisis before any easing of the sanctions.

The sanctions have sent inflation spiralling in Iraq and caused chronic shortages of food and medicines.

Emir of Bahrain pardons prisoners

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP) — Bahrain's emir marked the country's 33rd anniversary of independence Friday by pardoning a number of prisoners and saying his administration would increase its efforts to bolster the economy and create work opportunities.

Training Bahrainis for jobs and further developing the economy are the country's key aims, Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa said in the address broadcast on radio and television. His remarks were front-page headlines in

local newspapers. He highlighted achievements the former British colony had made since gaining independence in 1971, transforming itself from an archipelago of fishing and pearl diving islands into an offshore banking, tourism and services centre for the oil-rich Gulf.

The independence day celebrations came against a backdrop of increasing unrest over rising unemployment in the emirate and allegations of arbitrary arrests, both of

which complaints have sparked scattered protests in recent days.

Official statistics say 15,000 of the emirate's 250,000 people are without employment while unofficial figures claim the figure is twice as high. Some 500,000 people live in the Gulf state, but half of them are expatriates, mainly Indians, Pakistanis and Filipinos.

Although there are no official census figures, Shiites are believed to make up a majority of Bahrain's population

Queen urges U.N. to study, implement development report

HER MAJESTY Queen Noor last week met in New York with United Nations Secretary General Boutros Ghali to discuss recent and upcoming global conferences to promote world development, as well as the necessity to enhance Arab participation at international meetings.

During a ceremony attended by Ismat Kittani, Nitin Desai, under-secretary-general for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, Shaikat Fareed, director of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs at the U.N., Garry Jacobs and Robert MacFarlane, Queen Noor presented, on behalf of the International Commission of Peace and Food, the findings and recommendations of the commission's report, "Uncommon Opportunities: An Agenda for Peace and Equitable Development."

The Queen, a member of the ICPF since 1992, made a formal request that the recommendations of the report be examined and considered by U.N. agencies and committees.

The Queen briefed the U.N. secretary general on the report's theoretical framework, which presents an integrated and comprehensive approach to development, synthesising political, economic, social, military, environmental and human issues, and focuses on the human being as the most valuable resource for development.

The ICPF report calls for the strengthening of the U.N. peace-keeping and peace-making roles and the upgrading of the prerogative and diplomatic status of the secretary general, and the democratisation of the United Nations system and its member states, citing strong evidence that democratic forms of government are essential for lasting peace and social stability, human rights protection, economic development and human welfare.

The report also argues that hunger is not the result of inadequate food production capacities, and regards agriculture as a stage of development and an engine for industrialisation and economic growth.

Queen Noor said that the recommendations of the ICPF were especially relevant to Jordan and to the countries of the Middle East since the report proposes the

utilisation of the region's military resources for development in the area.

"The report shares Jordan's commitment to ban weapons of mass destruction, to reduce defence spending and to promote strategies for regional economic integration," the Queen said.

"We believe that the report's recommendations which are based on a wider theoretical framework of social development represent useful and valuable perspectives for the Social Summit in Copenhagen in March 1995," Queen Noor said.

Dr. Ghali, in turn, acknowledged the contribution of NGOs and welcomed the commission's report. The International Commission on Peace and Food, founded in 1989, is an independent non-profit organisation of concerned scientists and professionals working to develop practical strategies and programmes to accelerate progress, peace and political stability in all countries, to ensure food security and jobs for all, to promote human development and to formulate strategies for the protection of the environment.

Queen Noor contributed to the report of the working group on strategies to accelerate human development and participated in the commission's fifth plenary meeting held in 1993.

The Queen also met with members of the ICPF in Amman, where she accepted a proposal by the commission that Jordan host a follow-up meeting in 1995. The proposed conference will bring together representatives of U.N. agencies and non-government organisations, as well as participants from Jordan and the region.

Accompanying Queen Noor was Jordan's permanent representative to the United Nations, Adnan Abu Odeh.

While in New York, the Queen also met with Dr. Noel Brown, director of the United Nations Environment Programme and Mr. Louis D'Amato, president of the International Institute for Peace Through Tourism. Mr. D'Amato presented Queen Noor with a maquette of the "Tree of Life" in appreciation of her efforts to develop travel and tourism to enhance international peace and understanding, advance development and promote environmental awareness.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:00 Pollards
17:30 Un Pou Tous
18:00 Reportage
18:30 Les Intrepides
19:00 News in French
19:15 Grands Galops
19:30 Harry and the Hendersons
20:00 Innovations
20:30 Quantum Leap
21:10 Murder She Wrote
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: "God Father"
23:59 Major Dad

PRAYER TIMES

06:01 Fajr
06:24 (Sunrise) Duha
11:31 Dhuhr
14:15 Asr
16:28 Maghrib
18:01 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Switzerland, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Arman International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624528
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

A depression will affect the Kingdom, thus temperatures are expected to drop with winds becoming southwesterly moderate to active. Rain is expected to fall in all parts of the Kingdom and skies cloudy to partly cloudy. In Aqaba, scattered showers are expected, skies partly cloudy, winds southerly moderate to active, and seas rough.

Min./Max. temp. Amman 4 / 9

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Aqaba 7 / 19
Deserts 2 / 10
Jordan Valley 7 / 18

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 13, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 54 per cent, Aqaba 26 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Ghaleb Zawaidh 736011
Dr. Youssef Nasser 751144
Dr. Khaldoun Asfour 666873
Dr. Adnan Zaghloul 895140
First pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 625672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 649445
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Akram Momani 245795
Alquds pharmacy (-)

ZARQA:
Dr. Issa Al Omari 901266
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 602800
Hotel Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information
(directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority
Electric Power
Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 06-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 813813/332
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 6442816
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn 6424412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 6641714
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845045
Al-Musader Hospital 6672779
The Islamic, Abdali 66612737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6651646
Italian, Al-Mutajirun 7710105
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/25
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital
Repairs (09)902560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272725
Ibn Al Nafar Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:45 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
09:15 Agaba (RJ)
09:40 New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 Beirut (RJ)
10:25 Colombo (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:59 Cairo (RJ)
17:55 London, Berlin (RJ)
17:55 Frankfurt (RJ)
18:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:20 Vienna (OS)
15:45 Rome, Larnaca (AZ)

18:15 Dubai (EK)
19:00 Sanaa (YV)
19:05 Larnaca (CY)
20:20 Beirut (ME)
21:55 Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:00 Cairo (MS)
22:45 London (BA)
23:05 Athens (OA)
23:20 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:25 Beirut (RJ)
07:50 Agaba (RJ)
11:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:35 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
11:40 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:00 Cairo (RJ)
12:45 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
13:00 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:05 Larnaca (RJ)
20:30 New Delhi (RJ)
20:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
21:25 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:45 Beirut (ME)
13:50 Vienna (OS)
19:15 Dubai (EK)
20:00 Sanaa (YV)
22:00 Larnaca (CY)
23:00 Cairo (MS)
23:59 Damascus, Paris (AF)
00:20 Amsterdam (KL)

02:35 London (BA)
02:40 Athens (OA)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	700	500
Banana	680	680
Banana (Mukammal)	620	620
Cabbage	170	100
Carrot	240	170
Cauliflower	350	300
Clementine	320	300
Cucumbers (large)	480	300
Cucumbers (small)	650	500
Eggplant	280	160
Grape Fruit	550	400
Lemon	240	140
Marrow (large)	260	180
Marrow (small)	420	300
Onion (green)	420	180
Onion (dry)	420	300
Orange	540	400
Pepper (hot)	420	300
Pepper (sweet)	420	300
Potato	300	200
Radish	280	200
Spinach	240	100
String Beans	900	700
Tomato	460	300

Urges U.N. to implement report

utilisation of the region's military resources for development in the area.

"The report shares Jordan's commitment to the development of the region, to reduce defence spending and to promote strategies for regional economic integration," the Queen said.

"We believe that the report's recommendations, which are based on a wide range of development projects, are essential and valuable for the region's economic development," the Queen said.

Dr. Zahab, in turn, acknowledged the contribution of the Queen's report to the development of the region. He said that the report is a valuable contribution to the development of the region.

Queen Noor contributed to the report of the working group on strategies to accelerate human development and participated in the commission's final planning meeting held in 1993.

The Queen's report with members of the Jordanian government, which she presented to the United Nations, was a landmark event in the development of the region.

Queen Noor's report to the United Nations was a landmark event in the development of the region. It was a valuable contribution to the development of the region.

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Her Royal Highness Princess Ghida Talal before the start of the piano recital (Petra)

Waleed Howrani plays classics, ragtime

AMMAN (J.T.) — World-renowned Lebanese pianist Waleed Howrani Friday night performed to a full house at the Royal Cultural Centre during a recital organised by the National Music Conservatory of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, according to a Royal Court statement.

This was Mr. Howrani's second piano recital in the Kingdom, said the statement. His Friday repertoire, the statement said, was drawn from pieces of Franz Schubert's Sonata in A minor, Op. 164, Frederic Chopin's Etude in E Sharp

Minor, Op. 25 and Nocturne in D Flat Major, Op. 53 and Boghos Gelalian's Sonata per Pianoforte. Mr. Howrani also played ragtime selections by Scott Joplin and James Johnson.

Born in New York in 1948, Mr. Howrani later moved to Beirut where he began his musical tutelage at the age of 13 under the late Soviet Armenian composer Aram Khachaturian. After graduating with high distinction from the Central Music School in Moscow, Mr. Howrani obtained his master and post-graduate degrees from the Tchaikovsky Conservatory where he studied with the

celebrated pianists Yakov Zak and Emil Gilels.

At the age of 18, he was awarded the Certificate of Honour at the Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition and two years later Mr. Howrani was awarded the Laureate at the Queen Elizabeth of Belgium competition.

The pianist has conducted concert tours in the former Soviet Union, Europe, the Middle East, Canada and in over 100 cities in the U.S. The piano recital was held under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Ghida Talal, the statement said.

Regent calls for improved pensions

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Thursday called on the government to reconsider the Pension Law with a view to improving pensions of retired servicemen and civil servants, in implementation of His Majesty King Hussein's directives.

In a letter to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Prince Hassan said, "I am conveying to you the desire of His Majesty King Hussein to amend the Military Pension Law to ensure a dignified life for our retired servicemen who were dedicated in their long years of service

to the homeland and the nation, and who continuously sacrificed in the Kingdom's battle for existence and its efforts at nation-building.

"As civil servants have served their country and people with dedication, so too have their military colleagues, and it is our duty to improve their salaries upon retirement," the Regent said.

The Royal directive stems from King Hussein's keen appreciation of the importance of work and improving productivity, in addition to the role played by the Jordanian Armed Forces in safeguarding national development, the Crown Prince said.

3 more political parties join the 8 opposed to peace treaty

AMMAN (J.T.) — Three Jordanian parties, the Baath Democratic Progressive Party and the Jordanian Constitutional Front, have joined the grouping of eight other parties opposed to the peace treaty with Israel, according to a statement issued Friday.

In the statement the eight parties declared their approval of the three other parties in joining the opposition, adding that representatives of all these groups held a dialogue earlier.

The statement said that the move was a positive step, it urged all other political

groups in Jordan to join in. The original eight political parties, which have declared their opposition to capitulation and normalisation of relations with Israel are: the Jordanian Baath Socialist Party, the Islamic Action Front, the National Action Front, the Jordan Socialist Democratic Party, the Jordan Democratic People's Party, the Jordanian Communist Party, the Jordan Democratic Arab Party and the Jordan Democratic People's Unionist Party.

There are 23 registered political parties in the Kingdom.

Delegation returns from Hikmat Al Masri funeral

AMMAN (J.T.) — A delegation of Parliament members, ministers and prominent Jordanian and Palestinian individuals Thursday returned to Amman from Nablus after attending the funeral of Hikmat Al Masri, a former minister who died Tuesday at the age of 87.

Thousands of mourners from Gaza and the West Bank attended the funeral of the late Mr. Masri, uncle of the Lower House Deputy and former Prime Minister Taher Al Masri.

the group, special arrangements were made for the delegation to cross into the West Bank and return the same day.

1994 census concludes successfully — officials

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Thursday marked the completion of field work for Jordan's national census, and according to an official at the Department of Statistics, the five-day enumeration was deemed a success.

"Everything went according to plan," said Abdullah Abdelaziz Zoubi, executive director of the 1994 census. The department estimated that they should have surveyed approximately 625,000 homes during the five-day census.

In an interview with the Jordan Times, Dr. Zoubi said that field workers encountered few problems, although some homes were unavailable to answer questions.

There were also refusals by some families to participate in the census.

"We will be trying to locate these people this week, and we will try to convince the others to participate in the census," he said.

Although the department hosted a two-month census awareness campaign, emphasizing the importance of a census and attempting to allay public scepticism surrounding the census, many remained suspicious of the motives for the count given

Jordan's new political situation. Most Jordanians are agreed on the necessity of a census in Jordan, but remain wary of its purpose given some of the census questions.

Why, many are asking, is it necessary to know where parents and grandparents are from? And what constitutes a refugee? When I first heard about the census, I could understand that they do need to count the people here — it's a government's right to know who is living within its borders," said Muna Shami, a 38-year-old teacher. "But when I heard the questions they were asking, I started to ask myself what is the purpose of this census?"

Mrs. Shami is of Lebanese origin married to a Jordanian who is of West Bank, Palestinian origin, and is a displaced person of 1967.

"Something I strongly disagreed with," said Mrs. Shami, "is that in 1967, the West Bank was part of Jordan — you can't call your own citizens refugees. Also, my children were born in Amman, but they consider themselves refugees from 1967."

"Maybe they need this information to discuss the status of refugees in upcoming peace talks," said one 49-year-old Jordanian of Palestinian origin, who wished to remain anonymous.

"But what is the purpose of knowing where my grandparents are from? They are dead. Besides, I don't even know where they are from originally — I don't even know where my own mother was born."

Statistics department officials have consistently maintained that the only objective of the census is to establish the number of inhabitants in each governorate so as to facilitate policy-making and planning in Jordan.

The census should shed light on the population of the Kingdom as well as provide information about employment, education and other demographics.

One family, however, said they did not recall being asked about their academic qualifications or employment status.

"They came to our house (on Thursday)," said Sylvia Hairabedian. "To be honest, they did not ask us many questions other than how many household members, their ages and where they were born. They did not ask us about jobs or anything, although I've heard other people say that they have been asked those things."

Others have complained that other questions did not belong in the census — for example, questions regarding property ownership and value — wondering why this information was relevant.

Census questionnaires will be returned to the Department of Statistics during the next few days. According to Dr. Zoubi, preliminary results from the census (number of people, age and sex) will be available within the next 10 days, while the results of November's 10 per cent population sampling will be published in March.

Results from the general census, he said, will not be available until October 1995.

JBA chief blames bureaucracy for lower private sector performance

AMMAN (J.T.) — Excessive bureaucracy and government intervention in private sector activities have had adverse effects on the private sector's performance in past years, charged Hamdi Tabbaa, chairman of the Jordanian Businessmen's Association (JBA).

In an address delivered at the Amman rotary club Thursday, Mr. Tabbaa said government intervention in pricing commodities obstructed the mechanism of the market's operations, and conflicting government resolutions were mainly responsible for confusion and market price fluctuations.

Despite that central economic policies are always obsolete and of no help to the country's economy, the private sector seldom feels that the government is following a specific and clear economic policy, Mr. Tabbaa said.

The government simply announced general programmes for development schemes, but although the private sector was responsible for many of the projects, it also had been solely entrusted with the task of funding these schemes, added Mr. Tabbaa.

creation of the country's industry.

Referring to privatisation, which he said was of paramount importance to the country's national economy, Mr. Tabbaa said that private corporations usually save significantly in administrative expenses and stop waste which is a regular feature of the public sector.

He said privatisation improves performance, reduces government control and intervention in economic sectors, develops the financial market and encourages competition which leads to better quality products.

Franco-Arab film festival to present new tendencies in region's cinema

By Jennifer Hamarneh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Starting Sunday evening, the French embassy, in cooperation with the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, will present an array of contemporary Franco-Arab films from countries of the Mediterranean: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, France, Syria and Egypt.

According to a French embassy spokesperson, this "cinema festival" is a first in Jordan and will include lectures, meetings and workshops conducted by professionals of diverse backgrounds. Most of these activities, which will be conducted either at the French Cultural Centre in Jabal Luweibdeh or the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation hall in Jabal Amman, will precede the showing of the films.

The organisers of the festival believe that at a time when regional cooperation is witnessing important developments in all fields, "the cultural sector must not lag behind." Thus, the six films they have chosen to present this week represent new tendencies in the modern cinema of the region.

Egyptian director Yousri Nasrallah's 1993 film "Mercedes" plunges his cast of

Yousra, Zaki Abdel Wahab, Menha Batrouni and Magdi Kamel into a kettling of human emotions and principles.

Romance at a Cairo cocktail party later finds Warda with the child of an African diplomat. Warda is forced to marry an old and wealthy Egyptian to "save the family honour." She names her son Nubi — he is not black but his features speak of his origin. As a young man Nubi is restless, idealistic and is committed to a psychiatric asylum. When released, he begins his quest for contact with reality and for those whom he calls his "real people, his real family."

"The Extras" is a 1993 Syrian production about over-painful, ever-tempting "forbidden love." Czech-educated Nabil Maleh, directs actors Samir Sami and Basam Kousa in a tale about a young man who falls in love with a widow. Tired of meeting in public places, the couple borrows a friend's flat, only to find that the oppression outdoors still permeates their indoor "make-believe oasis of freedom."

"Youssef: The Legend of the Seventh Sleeper" takes its name and theme from a legend about seven men who fall asleep for three centuries and wake to the tremendous changes around them. In this

1993 film, Director Mohammad Chouikh guides Youssef through his escape from an Algerian psychiatric ward, where as a former resistance fighter he believes himself to still be a prisoner of the French army. Youssef hides out in the bush, making short incursions into nearby farms and villages. But what he sees terrifies him — to Youssef, his countrymen have betrayed their cause.

In "Cheb," award-winning Algerian director Rachid Bouchareb recreates on screen the painful, "impossible" challenge of a youth expelled from France, the country where he was raised, overnight finding himself in his native (but to him unknown) Algeria and forced into military service where again he is a foreigner.

"Cheb," produced in 1991 was presented at the Cannes, Berlin, and Locarno film festivals and represented Algeria at the Academy Awards. Director Nacer Khemir utilises his renowned talents as a calligrapher in his 1991 film "The Lost Necklace of the Dove." In a dream-like mosaic of pictures, Hassan, the hero of this French-Italian-Tunisian production, is learning Arabic calligraphy at the height of the eleventh century Andalusian period. He is preoccupied with his

pursuit of synonyms for the word love and dreaming about the princess of Samarkand.

Moroccan-born director Mohammad Abdul Rahman Tazi's lead character, Hadji Ben Moussam, divorces the favourite of his three wives, Houda, in a fit of jealousy involving a sheep merchant. Madly in love with Houda, and regretting his action, Hadji Ben Moussam must follow Koranic law to win his sensual beauty back. Accordingly, Houda must marry and divorce another man before Hadji Ben Moussam can remarry her. Mr. Tazi's "Looking for the Husband of My Wife," produced in 1993, tracks the great ordeal of this pursuit borne by an already jealous man.

The organisers of the Franco-Arab Cinema Festival hope that "in its own modest way," this festival will "spawn a long series of similar events and integrate this capital into the cinematography circuit of the region."

They admit that such an ambition depends on how much support this project can earn and on the response it will receive from the public, particularly from the younger segment of the population. All films will be shown at the Concorde cinema in Amman.

WHAT'S GOING ON VIENNESE WALTZES

* "A Night of Viennese Waltzes" (including Strauss's Die Fledermaus, The Blue Danube, Voices of Spring, and Tales From Vienna Woods) at Philadelphia Hotel at 8:00 p.m.

ANNUAL BAZAAR

* Annual bazaar (includes pastries, handicrafts, and gifts) at the Marriott Hotel at 10:30 a.m.

NOVEL RECITAL

* Novel recital by Youssef Ghishan at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art at 6:30 p.m.

FILMS

* Film for children at 4:00 p.m. and another one for adults at 5:00 p.m. at Goethe-Institut (titles not given).

LECTURE

* Lecture (in Arabic) entitled "Towards a New Perspective of Women" by Dr. Fahimah Sharaf Al Din of Lebanon at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Plastic art exhibition by Laila Kawash at the Royal Cultural Centre.

* Exhibition of paintings on leather by Iraqi artist Bakim Dabbab at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.

* Painting and water colours exhibition by Suhail Ma'touq at Baladna Art Gallery.

HAZAR RAILWAY TRAIN

Up Hazara
Down Hazara
Up Hazara
Down Hazara

MARKET PRICES

Wheat
Barley
Oats
Sorghum
Millet
Rice
Maize
Soybean
Cottonseed
Sunflower
Rapeseed
Mustardseed
Groundnut
Peanut
Almond
Walnut
Cashew
Coconut
Palm
Jatropha
Castor
Sesame
Flax
Hemp
Jute
Cotton
Wool
Silk
Hides
Fur
Feathers
Eggs
Honey
Beech
Gum
Resin
Turpentine
Kerosene
Gasoline
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U.K. Conservatives trounced by landslide in by-elections

CAMBRIDGE, England (R) — Prime Minister John Major, reeling after his ruling Conservative were trounced in a parliamentary by-election, Friday conceded it was a very poor result and urged his bickering party to reunite behind him.

In the biggest swing from the Conservatives to the Labour Party since 1935, Graham Postles polled less than a fifth of the votes in the central England seat of Dudley West, which had been held by Mr. Major's party for 15 years.

Voters swept Labour candidate Ian Pearson to victory and sent a clear signal they were disillusioned by Conservative splits over Europe, tax rises and allegations of sleaze in Mr. Major's deeply unpopular government.

The Conservatives suffered meltdown — only 7,706 people voted for the ruling party compared with 34,729 at the April 1992 general election. Labour's vote held steady at 28,400.

Mr. Major, visiting a flag

factory in the eastern England town of Cambridge, told reporters: "It was a very poor result, but I think some good will come out of it."

"People within the party must now realise they must pull together towards the same end for the good of the country."

The Conservatives, at an all-time low in opinion polls, hope Britain's economic recovery will convert into a "feel good factor" among voters by the time the next general election is called some time before mid-1997.

Mr. Major conceded the good news message was not getting through to ordinary Britons, still wary following the longest recession since the 1930s.

"People can see the country is doing much better, but they don't see that they and their families are benefiting," he said.

After a catastrophic month Mr. Major, prime minister since 1990, is now hoping the Christmas recess will give him a much needed chance to regroup before the new year.

The Conservatives' loss of the Dudley seat follows the election of eight conservative legislators from the parliamentary party two weeks ago for refusing to back Mr. Major in a vote over increasing Britain's payments to the European Union which he had declared a matter of confidence. A ninth resigned.

If these nine MPs returned to the Conservative fold, the party would now have a precarious 13-seat majority. These rebels helped Labour vote down a doubling of tax on home heating fuel last week, perhaps the worst defeat suffered by Mr. Major.

Dudley was the first parliamentary by-election since Tony Blair took over as Labour leader in July, vowing to lead a new look moderate party freed from its hardline Socialist past.

Mr. Blair said the resounding victory showed the Conservative agenda of the 1980s had run its course and people were turning to Labour for new ideas. The Conservatives have been in power 15 years. "It's an extraordinary vic-

tory. It's a devastating defeat for the government," he said. "It is a test, not just of how unpopular and discredited the government are, but also a test of 'new labour'."

Speaking of a "bond of trust" between Labour and the nation, he said: "People are turning to our party and our ideas but I am not in any shape or form complacent... the agenda of the '80s may have run its course but people want an agenda for the 1990s."

The 29 per cent swing to Labour was the biggest since 1935 when Labour won a seat in Liverpool on a 30 per cent swing in a freak result after the intervention of a high-profile candidate standing as an independent Conservative.

The minority Liberal Democrats, who have won three by-elections since the last general election, fared poorly at Dudley, crushed by the enthusiasm of voters to vote for the candidate most likely to turn the Conservatives out.

Wave of Japanese student suicides continues

TOKYO (R) — Japanese police said Friday that the number of deaths in a wave of student suicides had risen to five, despite appeals to bullied or troubled youngsters to resist the temptation to take their own life.

A 14-year-old schoolboy hanged himself and a 13-year-old boy jumped in front of a moving train Thursday in Saitama prefecture, north of Tokyo, adding to a string of youth suicides which have shocked Japan.

The deaths came "only hours after a group of psychiatrists issued a statement urging students not to copy three bullying victims who committed suicide over the past three weeks."

The deaths, widely covered in the media, have triggered national soul-searching about bullying in Japan's tightly disciplined school system and the victimisation of children who somehow stand out from the crowd.

But local police quoted teachers, parents and classmates of the two latest suicides as saying they could not think of any reason for their action. The 13-year-old boy left no suicide note, but the other student said in his note, "this is an experiment to find out what will happen to me after death."

"Although television programmes reported a string of suicides as a result of bullying, mine is a mere experiment. I would never kill myself because of bullying," the note said.

The student's father told police his son had been reading a book explaining ways of committing suicide.

"It is a critical situation," Hiroshi Inamura, a psychiatrist professor at Hitotsubashi University, told Reuters. It looks like the beginning of copycat suicides among students who are not involved in bullying or have any serious problem.

Prof. Inamura, one of the psychiatrists who issued the statement, said the situation reminded him of a wave of suicides triggered by the suicide of a popular singer in 1986.

"Teenagers tend to beautify and yearn for death, and massive media coverage of student suicides easily prompts them to follow media to stop covering them. If that is impossible, then they should report such news as calmly and simply as possible."

The case which first drew media attention was that of Kivoteru Okouchi, a 13-year-old who hanged himself leaving a note which said classmates repeatedly dunked him in a nearby river and extorted more than \$10,000 from him over a year.

The shockwaves from the suicide spread as far as the government, prompting Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama to hold a special cabinet meeting to discuss schoolyard bullying.

Following the meeting, the Education Ministry issued a formal directive urging teachers to crack down on bullying.

Uneasy peace reigns in contested Angolan town

UIGE, Angola (R) — Angola's ceasefire is hanging by a thread in the northern town of Uige where government troops are encamped just a grenade's throw away from their UNITA rebel foes.

"We are at peace now," said Joaquim Gonga, a government soldier on the perimeter, gesturing at a group of UNITA guards 100 metres away. "They are our brothers."

But when asked to accompany journalists across the no-man's land, Gonga refused. "No way in the world," he said. "You can be sure I'll go up there I will not come back."

UNITA rebels surround the town which government troops captured from them last month as part of a broad offensive apparently aimed at gaining control of as much territory as possible ahead of the ceasefire signed in Lusaka on Nov. 20.

"I am personally worried about the situation in Uige," General Chris Garuba, the chief U.N. military officer in Angola, said this week. "Both sides are in too close contact... this is very provocative."

Gen. Garuba heads about 80 U.N. observers who are monitoring the ceasefire. Their numbers are due to increase to about 500 by next month.

Six young government soldiers sheltering from the rain under a mango tree in Uige said they did not expect more

fighting. "Our orders are not to attack anybody," one said. "We do not think there will be an offensive here."

But Brigadier Joaquim Tchiloya, commander of government forces in the northern military region, issued a veiled warning to the rebel movement of Jonas Savimbi which still controls road access to Uige and the town of Negage, 35 kilometres away.

"UNITA will keep Negage if they behave themselves but if they do not behave then they will see what happens. If there was no ceasefire they would have lost Negage too," Brig. Tchiloya said.

He said the government offensive ahead of the ceasefire, which captured the UNITA-headquarters of Huambo, had improved the chances of lasting peace after nearly 20 years of civil war.

"In any game there are winners and losers," he said. "The game finishes, and somebody is the winner. UNITA controlled three-quarters of Angola. Now what do they have?"

The head of the U.N. monitoring team in Uige, Colonel Luther Lauria of Argentina, said there had been skirmishes but no serious clashes around the town in the last fortnight.

"There is always friction because the two sides are so close," he said. "The situation is not very clear. UNITA has always wanted Uige but I do not think anything is about to happen."

Bhutto vows to fight Karachi 'mini-insurgency'

ISLAMABAD (R) — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said Friday that Pakistan was facing a "mini-insurgency" in its commercial capital, Karachi, and vowed her government would fight terrorists at all costs.

"There is a mini-insurgency in Karachi, there is guerrilla warfare and we should realise this," Ms. Bhutto told a news conference at Islamabad Airport after returning from a three-day Islamic summit meeting in Casablanca.

"We know the designs of terrorists roaming in Karachi," she said. "They

are against Pakistan's unity and we will fight them at all costs."

At least 109 people have been killed in Karachi in the past 15 days. Violence escalated after the government withdrew troops from the city after two and half years of law-enforcement duties.

Guns killed 13 people and wounded 27 in different areas of Karachi Thursday.

Ms. Bhutto said her government would seek to build up the civil administration and also take "political and economic measures to solve people's basic problems."

Pakistan claims diplomatic victory over Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (R) — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said Friday that Pakistan had won a major diplomatic victory in its dispute with India over Kashmir at an Islamic summit meeting this week in Casablanca.

She told a news conference on returning home from the three-day meeting of the 52-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) that a declaration of support adopted Thursday had "internationalised" the Kashmir issue and brought it to the mainstream of the Muslim World.

The declaration backed a peaceful and political solution in Kashmir based on long-standing U.N. resolutions, which call for a plebiscite in the Himalayan region, where India is fighting a four-

year-old Muslim separatist revolt. Ms. Bhutto called the declaration "an historic achievement."

"We think it will strengthen the Kashmiri people's movement. It has been internationalised to the extent that India's efforts to localise or bilateralise have been nullified forever."

New Delhi, which rules two-thirds of Kashmir, regards the former princely state as an integral part of the Indian union and is ready only for bilateral talks with Islamabad, which controls the remaining third.

But Islamabad says the predominantly Muslim Kashmiris must decide in the U.N.-mandated plebiscite whether to join Islamic Pakistan or secular but Hindu-majority India.

China sentences 10 activists to up to 20 years

BEIJING (R) — A Beijing court Friday passed China's harshest sentences against political activists for several years, jailing nine dissidents for terms ranging from three to 20 years.

The sentences were among the heaviest meted out to political dissidents since the nationwide purge that followed the bloody army suppression of student-led pro-democracy demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989.

The Beijing Intermediate People's Court in the district of Babaoshan sentenced nine political activists to jail terms for "counter-revolutionary" crimes, or subversion, dropped charges against five and placed one under supervision for two years.

"They are innocent," raged a relative of one of those sentenced. "Judging from the facts in the bill of indictment they are innocent. I am so angry. We never expected the sentence to be this heavy."

Hu Shigen, a 39-year-old lecturer at the Beijing languages institute, received the heaviest sentence of 20 years on charges of heading a counter-revolutionary group and "spreading counter-revolutionary propaganda," the verdict said.

Dozens of police guarded the two doors to the court and relatives of those indicted were barred from the courtroom.

Presiding Judge Wang Huigang later emerged and read out the sentences while those convicted were whisked to prison through a back door.

All those sentenced planned to appeal, relatives said. "Perhaps they are sending a warning to anyone considering using Mr. Deng's death to launch a protest against the Communist Party," a diplomat said.

Paramount leader Deng Xiaoping is 90 years old. Kang Yuchun, 30, a doctor, was sentenced to 17 years on the same two charges as Mr. Hu. Mr. Liu Jingsheng, 40, a chemical-factory worker, was jailed for 15 years on the same charges. Mr. Liu and Mr. Hu have already appealed, relatives said.

Wang Guoqi, aged 32 and unemployed, was jailed for 11 years for leading a counter-revolutionary group. "They (the sentences) are appalling severe," said Robin Munro, Hong Kong director of Human Rights Watch/Asia. "The severe level of the sentencing says... don't even think of engaging in even peaceful dissent."

The court passed five-year terms on Lu Zhigang, a 26-year-old law student from Beijing University, along with Chen Wei, 25, unemployed Zhang Chunzhu, 42, and Wang Tiancheng, 30, a law lecturer at Beijing University for spreading counter-revolutionary propaganda and actively taking part in a counter-revolutionary group.

The defendants were arrested in May and June, 1992, for allegedly forming or joining three underground dissident groups and writing and printing political leaflets.



U.S. Vice President Al Gore (left) and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin shake hands prior to the fourth meeting of Russian-American Commission on Economic and Technological Cooperation in Moscow (AFP photo)

Gore: Talks with Yeltsin 'productive'

MOSCOW (AFP) — U.S. Vice President Al Gore said here Friday he had "full and productive" talks with Russian President Boris Yeltsin on the future of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

Mr. Gore, on a three-day visit here, visited Mr. Yeltsin in the Kremlin hospital where the Russian leader has been recovering from minor nasal surgery since last Saturday.

He said a meeting would be held in January between Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to discuss U.S.-Russian relations. But Mr. Gore did not say where it would take place.

In a joint press conference Friday with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, the U.S. vice president

said bilateral relations were "strong, dynamic and firmly on track."

Mr. Chernomyrdin said: "I have all the reasons for a certain sense of satisfaction."

Mr. Gore is making the first high-level visit here by a U.S. official since a rift earlier this month between Moscow and Washington over plans to expand NATO eastwards.

After meeting Mr. Yeltsin, Mr. Gore said only they had had "full and productive discussion about the future of NATO," but gave no details.

He said Mr. Yeltsin "looks healthy, he looks good." Following surgery, Mr. Yeltsin has not made any public statements for the last week during which Russian troops have become embroiled in battles with secessionists in the small

Caucasus Republic of Chechnya.

Mr. Yeltsin jolted world leaders last week when he told an international conference the United States was isolating Russia by inviting Eastern European states to join NATO, which would bring NATO to the borders of Russia.

Meanwhile a bomb alert forced the wife of U.S. Vice President Al Gore to cancel a visit to Moscow school Friday, ITAR-TASS reported.

Tipper Gore, who is accompanying her husband on a three-day tour here, cancelled her appearance at School Number 1,234 after an anonymous telephone caller announced that a bomb had been planted there.

The school was immediately evacuated and police searched the premises.

Clinton spokeswoman to quit at year-end

WASHINGTON (R) — White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers has formally notified U.S. President Bill Clinton she will leave her job at the end of the year, the Washington Post reported Friday.

The paper quoted Mr. Myers as saying her last day would be Dec. 31, but she would leave the White House next week for Christmas with her family and would not return.

Ms. Myers told the paper she had not decided what she

would do next, although she had held discussions on several job offers.

Ms. Myers, the first woman to hold the prestigious White House post, most likely will be replaced by State Department spokesman Michael McCurry, the paper said, quoting unnamed sources.

Ms. Myers' decision to leave the White House follows a failed attempt, by Chief of Staff Leon Panetta earlier this year to replace

her as part of a staff overhaul.

It also comes on the heels of a series of other recent departures from the White House, including the resignation earlier this month of Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen and the firing last week of Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders.

Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy will also leave the administration on Dec. 31, and there have been rumours of other shifts in the cabinet.

Portuguese government faces crisis

LISBON (R) — Portugal Tetered on the brink of a political crisis Friday as Prime Minister Anibal Cavaco Silva refused to say publicly whether he would lead the ruling centre-right Social Democrat Party (PSD) into 1995 elections.

Political sources and the Portuguese media say Mr. Cavaco, an astute and respected economist who has led Portugal with a firm hand for the past nine years, is angry over a series of scandals that have dogged his party in recent months and is keen to quit.

"Cavaco is on the way out," the Lisbon daily *Publico* said in a banner front page headline Friday.

But Cavaco Silva, who is due to address a crucial meeting of the PSD's National Council Saturday, declined to comment Friday about his political future.

He did not answer when Reuters asked him whether he would lead the PSD into the next parliamentary elections, due in October 1995.

Mr. Cavaco Silva, 55, also refused to say when he would reveal his political ambitions when questioned on the sidelines of a ministerial conference to sign the European

energy charter.

Publico quoted party and government sources as saying he would stay on as prime minister until the next elections, but would then return to being a university professor.

The report followed weeks of speculation that Mr. Cavaco would run for the presidency when his arch-rival, veteran socialist leader Mario Soares, steps down in 1996.

Political skirmishing between the two men reached a new climax this month when Mr. Soares voted the reappointment of the head of the air force.

Democracies are on rise but most people are not free, report says

WASHINGTON (R) — The number of democracies has doubled over the past two decades but most of the world's population still live in lands where liberties are limited or denied, a U.S. human rights group reported Thursday.

The Freedom House 1994 report tallied 114 democracies — the largest number in history and up seven from last year. The new entries are Haiti, South Africa, Ukraine, Mozambique, Malawi, Guinea-Bissau and Palau.

Only western Africa's Gambia lost its democratic government this year.

"Last year we had to report a dramatic drop in respect for political rights and civil liberties. This year we can report modest gains," Freedom House Chairwoman Bette Bao Lord told a news conference.

Freedom House describes itself as a non-partisan, non-profit and non-governmental group that monitors political rights and civil liberties in 191 nations and 58 territories.

Its survey said 60 per cent of the countries are now formal democracies, defined as systems where people freely elect authorities among competing groups or individuals. But a vast majority of the world's population still lives in countries and territories that fall in Freedom House's "partially free" or "not free" categories, where basic rights are either curtailed for simply denied.

Its president, Adrian Karatnycky, said that despite the opportunities arising from the end of the cold war, there is little evidence of a sustained global push toward

societies that provide strong protection for those rights.

"Freedom continues to elude the vast majority of the world's people, with nearly 40 per cent living in partly free states and 40 per cent living in not free states," he said.

The nominal increase of democracies is also offset by a rise in the number of countries at risk of slipping back.

Mr. Karatnycky listed ethnic and sectarian strife, government corruption, excessive military and oligarchic influence and foreign destabilisation attempts as some of the major threats facing fledgling democracies.

Bosnia was singled out as a typical case where a government cannot guarantee its citizens' basic rights due to the war between Muslim and Serb groups.

Freedom House noted that former Soviet Bloc countries like Russia, Ukraine and Romania had advanced in their transition to democracy but warned that they still risked regressing.

"These countries have made substantial progress toward the expansion of freedom but they have not yet crossed the threshold and risk slipping back," Mr. Karatnycky said.

Government corruption and the influence of drug cartels were cited as major threats for Latin American democracies.

Singled out in the survey were Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Venezuela, all of which were rated as "partially free."

"The leaders who attended last weekend's summit of the Americas would have us believe otherwise, but the fact is that only three countries in Latin America have firmly established rule of law: Costa Rica, Chile and Uruguay," said Freedom House's Latin America expert, Douglas Payne.

At the bottom of the group's rating were 21 countries and six territories where basic rights suffered the most abuses.

That list included Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bhutan, Burma, China, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Iraq, Libya, Mauritania, North Korea, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

Sudan was deemed the worst offender. Iraq was a close second, followed by North Korea.

Freedom House argued that strengthening emerging democracies should be a focal point of U.S. aid policy, as well as countries' respect for human rights and liberties.

Mr. Karatnycky said there was no reason to dole out U.S. taxpayers' money to help Indonesia's one-party state or Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, who closed down a democratically elected Congress in 1992, or Mauritania, which condones slave labour.

"A country like Kenya, which has a military dictatorship, is due to receive \$40 million in assistance this year, which is more than the entire budget of the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy," he added.

Indian doctors hope music will help ex-president

NEW DELHI (R) — Doctors have placed earphones on former Indian President Zail Singh hoping Sikh spiritual music might help him recover from critical injuries received in a car accident last month. Dr. Pramila Chari told the Press Trust of India the earphones, attached to a portable walkman cassette recorder, were placed on Mr. Singh Tuesday in hopes the continuous music would help him recover. India's only Sikh head of state, Mr. Singh, 78, was president from 1982 to 1987 during a violent revolt by members of his Sikh religion. His condition has deteriorated past days and he has not responded to verbal requests for three days. Dr. Chari said the former president had begun moving his eyes since the earphones playing cassettes of Sukhmani Sahib, traditional Sikh spiritual music, were placed on him.

Zimbabwe MP: Condon use plot against Africans

HARARE (R) — A female member of Zimbabwe's parliament has said campaigns urging the use of condoms and other contraceptives were a plot by developed nations to wipe out Africans. "Condoms and contraceptives are a way of wiping out Africans. Africa is not overpopulated," legislator Ruth Chinamano told the house Thursday night during free debate ahead of the Christmas and New Year holidays. "Whites want blacks to be less," she said. "Every action by developed countries since the days of slavery was for their own economic gain. We should view foreign prescription with suspicion." Ms. Chinamano, an outspoken member of President Robert Mugabe's ruling party, urged Zimbabwean women "never to be deceived to have few children because they will lose their marriages."

Minister jumps into harbour in underwear to win bet

BORN (AFP) — German Labour Minister Norbert Blum jumped into a Greek harbour in his underwear in order to win a bet after drinking several glasses of ouzo, the minister's office said. The daily tabloid Bild reported that Mr. Blum, 59, went on a cruise last Saturday near Athens after meeting with his Greek counterpart Yannis Skoularidis and then dined at a tavern with one of his associates who dared him to jump into the water for 80 German marks. Bild said the minister, who had downed a few glasses of ouzo, the Greek aniseed drink, accepted the bet and proceeded to take his pants and shirts off before jumping into the water and making a few breaststrokes before an applauding audience.

City lights too much for wild boar

BIENNE, Switzerland (AFP) — A wild boar that wandered into the centre of this western Swiss town panicked and charged an 82-year-old man before a game keeper shot and killed the animal, press reports said Friday. Walter Gilgen said he had been walking to his doctor's office when something ploughed into him from behind. Turning around he found himself facing a young, 70-kilogramme (154 pound) wild boar, who charged again then bit the man in the leg. Mr. Gilgen somehow managed to kick off the beast which ran away. Police and a game keeper, alerted by this time, tracked it down in a courtyard where it was shot. The gamekeeper said it had apparently been hit by a car after straying out of the forest, making it particularly aggressive. Mr. Gilgen was home again after being treated at hospital.

China to build 160 kg gold Buddha statue

BEIJING (R) — China is to use 160 kg of gold, 10 kg of platinum and 60 kg of silver to create a gem-encrusted statue of Buddha next year, the Xinhua News Agency said. It said the 2.8 metre high statue would be crafted by the Jinsheng Jewellery Co. and the Royal Jewellery and Arts Co. of the southern boom town of Shenzhen under the auspices of the Bureau of Religious Affairs, the State Council (cabinet) and the People's Bank of China.

مكتبة المصطفى

Jordan Times

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Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 6671716, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

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Sad to overlook reality

JORDAN WAS of course right in entering a reservation on the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Casablanca resolution pertaining to the Islamic holy shrines in Jerusalem for not noting this country's historic and distinct role in the Holy City and its Islamic places. As His Majesty King Hussein told the OIC summit a few days ago, these Islamic shrines "are a trust in our hands as we have rescued them with the blood of our sons in the 1948 war and we have constructed it three times on behalf of the Islamic nation. We will do our duty towards the shrines in the name of the nation until its status has been determined in an acceptable and appropriate manner."

This crystal clear Jordanian position unfortunately was not received with the necessary appreciation or recognition even though it is legitimate and sound on religious, historic and legal grounds. Instead of supporting the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement to work together on this point, the Casablanca declaration decided that the OIC should endeavour to assist the transfer of all authority and responsibility in east Jerusalem to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) which of course includes authority and responsibility over the Islamic holy shrines at a time when such a transfer of authority does not appear to be on the cards at least for the time being.

Against this backdrop, the Casablanca resolution on the holy places serves as a spoiling factor that can be exploited to undermine the only existing Arab or Islamic control over them. We in Jordan must therefore deal with the resolution as only a declaration that has no binding effect on the policy of the country, as the prime minister clearly stated yesterday. The final status of east Jerusalem will be the subject of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and will surely occupy centre stage when the final chapter in these peace talks is determined and agreed upon by the two parties. Meanwhile, no good service can be made by rocking the boat on an issue relevant to all Arabs and Muslims, especially when any attempt to interfere with it at this time will have no positive effect.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour discussed the outcome of the Casablanca Islamic conference saying that since the participating countries are in disarray, Muslim people should expect nothing to be achieved. No one expects the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to come to the aid of the Muslims in Bosnia or Afghanistan and end their sufferings, said Saleh Qallab. Some of the leaders taking part in the conference went there simply to declare their total opposition to all forms of Islamic extremism and others went to declare that they resort to any tool or measure to confront the great Satan and Zionism and imperialism, said the writer. Some of the leaders went to the conference simply to attack those countries which are involved in the peace process and not to think of ways to save the Palestinians from their plight, added Qallab. He said none of the leaders was strong enough to suggest collective action to save the Bosnians or submit a plan to end the conflict in Afghanistan or even to approach Russia over Chechnya. Indeed, no one in his right mind expects from the Islamic conference to do anything towards solving these chronic issues and there is no wonder that the conference, like others before it, has ended in failure.

A WRITER in Sawt Al Shaab daily praised the performance of the Royal Jordanian (RJ) as a national institution that serves as a bridge linking Jordan with the outside world. Under all circumstances, even during the Gulf crisis when all other airlines refrained from carrying out operations in the region, RJ was alone serving as a bridge between the Middle East and the western world, transporting the stranded nationals from the Gulf, said Ahmad Dabbas. The writer said that now that the RJ is being transformed into a private institution, or a shareholding entity, it does not negate its national character nor does it impede RJ's plans for expanding to reach all corners of the world. The writer said that the national airline will remain an important instrument for promoting the tourism industry in Jordan and serve as a very important national institution for Jordanians and all visitors to this country.

JORDANIAN PERSPECTIVE

By Dr. Musa Keilani

What weighs in the balance of human rights

UNDER THE patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, a seminar on rights and humanities took place in Amman between Dec. 10-12. It was done in cooperation with the Jordanian Institute of Diplomacy. The amazing surprise at the seminar was that the church lobby tried to dress up its own human rights agenda, though historically, it was the western church which gave legitimacy to all the constitutions that violated basic human rights. The hidden agenda of some participants was to extract a consensus from Muslim participants to allow Muslim girls to marry from other faiths, under the title of freedom of choice. Moreover, the proselytising participants attempted to wrench out from Muslims the right to apostasy, under the title of freedom of opinion. To support Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasreen, the church lobby's hidden agenda tried to emphasise and distort the freedom of expression and literary creativity.

The last three decades of the twentieth century witnessed a lot of tension and misperception between the Muslim World and the West. The issue of human rights seems to some Arabs as the "whip" with which Muslims are to be disciplined.

The historical legacy of both sides is infused with selective memories which frustrates and impedes mutual understanding.

The historical experience of the West has become universally predominant, both politically and economically, due to the technological, scientific advances.

Earlier civilisations remained mainly confined to the geographical limits of their continental boundaries as seen in Judeo-Christian, Graeco-Roman, Chinese, Islamic and Slavic Orthodox civilisations.

I believe there are no fundamental contradictions between the ethical principles of human rights in the West and the Islamic concept of human rights in the Arab civilisation. The common potential of both can be translated and actualised in a constructive way if real efforts and genuine will are devoted to implement it. The bridges of common understanding are:

a) The rights of a group, b) the rights of an individual, c) the rights of resident aliens.

It is to be admitted that the concept of national liberation from foreign rule traces its roots to the Germanic tradition of the "nation and its rights" following the Napoleonic wars, the French revolution, and the impact of the Magna Carta of 1215. Pakistani Muslim nationalism, the young Turk movement and others were influenced by the Western literature in this respect.

The horrors of the two world wars resulted in so many tragedies for refugees and displaced people that they led to President Woodrow Wilson's 14 points in 1918, the U.N. Charter in 1945, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and many other statements which remained an expression of wishful thinking with no mechanism for enforcement.

Moreover, the European Convention on Human Rights, in November 1950, lacked the mechanism to include migrant workers as seen in the proceedings of the European Court of Human Rights.

The European declaration emphasised the civil and political rights to the exclusion of the economic and social dimension which the U.N. stressed.

There is a widespread perception that international power politics raises the issue of civil and political rights in Arab countries as a tool of pressure, while many Western advocates see the economic and social rights issue being

used as a cover in Muslim countries when political and civil rights are violated.

In the West, the tradition of human rights has been recently compared to two millennia of Christian history. The ideals of religions have often been contradicted by their corruption.

In the West, the origins of today's human rights agenda are to be found in opposition to religious institutions or others given legitimacy by religion. Only when their power base was broken, the scriptural and revealed foundation of an excellent human rights agenda was discovered.

Though the principles of human rights in the West are in total harmony with the fundamental concepts of human rights in Islam, there are certain differences we have to note if we want to search for a common ground for understanding and cooperation.

It took several decades for the town people, lords and peasants to wrench out their rights in 1215 in Britain. The same applied to France, Germany and other European nations.

In Islam, such a gradual evolution did not take place. It was just a direct Koranic verse which put an end to all aspects of discrimination according to colour or race. It was just one Koranic verse which emphasised the equality between a former slave and a bedouin sheikh. Islam, in one Sura (chapter), put an end to any denial of human rights due to race, language, colour, faith or gender.

But in the West, it was the feudal classes of 13th century England which raised the claims to their rights. It was the "ancient regime" in France which sided with the American revolution and its Declaration of Independence and Human Rights in 1776.

The colonial powers early this century, camouflaged their imperial designs in the Wilsonian Nation State Language of the mandate.

By using the language of the human rights discourse many people here fear that this is another successor to the Wilsonian precedent of the language of the mandate.

The trend is to emphasise the political rather than the economic human rights as one issue. But to stress on the civil rather than the social rights is another issue.

The general perception is that human rights in the West are exclusively for their own citizens and do not extend to other nations of different race or creed.

The Vienna conference on human rights, in the autumn of 1993, did not end the sufferings of Muslim Bosnians. Had those thousands of Bosnians been hundreds of Jews, the whole Western world would have put an end to the acts of genocide.

The 1945 Charter of the United Nations refers in its preamble "to fundamental human rights and the equal rights of men and women, and of nations large and small."

But three years later, the Arab Palestinians were not considered a nation to have their own country. Instead their identity was usurped and their families evicted from their ancestral homeland. There was no cry in the West to protect their human rights.

Moreover, the mortality rate among the Iraqi children under five, has become 11 times more than during the pre-sanctions time due to lack of nutritional and medical care. But the Western public opinion did not sympathise, using the false pretext of punishing Saddam Hussein.

Had those 52,000 Iraqi children under the age of five been New Yorkers or English, the whole philosophy of human rights would have been enacted.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Supply and demand should govern prices

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

The local press in the past week gave prominence to domestic issues, the Casablanca Islamic conference, the Middle East and the situation in Chechnya.

Tackling the soaring prices of commodities in the Jordanian market, Hani Saoudi, a columnist in Al Ra'i, said that the rising prices and the soaring cost of living is intolerable, noting that the limited-income groups were mainly feeling the brunt.

The rise in price of basic foodstuff by even one single fils can be hard on these groups and they have all the right to raise their voices in complaint, said the writer.

The problem lies with the absolute control over the prices by the Ministry of Supply which for instance is preventing the dairy companies from raising the price of their products when they continue to claim they are operating at a loss, said the writer.

He said that central control of prices is an obsolete policy which led to the impoverishment of the former Soviet Union. The writer suggests that prices be allowed to be floated and be decided by the force of supply and demand, provided that this happens in a free market where no particular group is given the right to monopolise certain commodities.

Shafiq Obedat, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab, dwelt on the same topic by calling on the government to follow the example of advanced nations by raising the wages of workers in accordance with the rise in the price index of various commodities. The writer said in Jordan there exists no specific system to measure the rise in prices nor to allow living allowances to help the limited-income groups to cope with the situation.

The current soaring

prices of every commodity are turning the limited-income groups into very poor people facing want and poverty every day, said the writer.

A columnist in Al Dustour urged the Ministry of Supply to control the prices of basic commodities, including vegetables, and prevent manipulations and profiteering on the part of merchants.

Mohammad Daoud said that there is no specific system for determining the prices, the merchants feel that they have a free hand and sell their products at exorbitant prices. It is not enough for the ministry to only limit the prices, it is equally important to send out teams and ensure that the rules are respected, added the writer.

A columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily criticised the authorities concerned with gas cylinder warehouses for allowing them to be located close to residential areas.

Referring to the explosion that destroyed 1,000 gas cylinders which were much in need by the public, Samir Nayfeh said that the Civil Defence Department should be more vigilant and authorised to have the final say in this matter and so avoid tragedies. The explosion could have had very dangerous results had the incident not been immediately reported and firefighters called to the scene immediately, he said.

Mohammad Subeithi dwelt on the same topic, urging the civil defence to take precautionary measures to protect the public's safety and the lives of citizens. The writer said that many of the cylinders containing the dangerous gas are rusty and need replacement, but are still sold to the public, endangering lives. He also accused the distributors of gas cylinders of stealing part of the contents before selling them to the public.

that stricter measures be taken in this regard.

Tareq Masarweh, a columnist in Al Ra'i, referred to the collapse of one of the newly finished buildings in Amman, accusing the concerned government departments of neglecting their duty. The writer said that never in the history of Jordan was it heard of a building collapsing. The incident terrified the public and cast doubt about the soundness of the construction system in the country. Indeed, the public is beginning to despair with the official institutions, not only because of the collapse of the building, but also in view of the rising level of crime and murders and the reported contamination of foodstuff sold to the public.

Fahd Faneh, an economist writing in Al Ra'i daily, bitterly criticised the World Bank for its recent report in which it recommended that no investments be made in Jordan until the country has paid back its foreign debts. The writer said that the report also noted that even if the debts are written off, the country would be facing economic difficulties after 1997.

He said that such talk clearly discourages the investors and tends to adversely affect development. The writer also criticised the report for calling for the transformation of the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan into towns and villages, a clear service to Israel which adamantly refuses the repatriation of the displaced people to their lawful homeland.

Referring to the Casablanca Summit, Al Ra'i daily said that His Majesty King Hussein has made it clear that Jordan is not competing with any party over the city, but clearly cares for the holy shrines until a final solution to the status of the Holy City has been reached.

The paper said that Jordan had all the right to express its concerns about

the final statement issued by the Organisation of Islamic Conference because it ignored the traditional and historical role of Jordan towards the Islamic places over the past decades.

Taher Adwan, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that instead of serving as a forum for reconciliation, the Casablanca summit proved to be a venue for consecrating hostilities among Islamic countries.

The summit called for the Islamic regimes to crack down on the Islamist groups which are fighting injustice caused by occupation and aggression, and thus started a war between the Islamist groups and the Islamic regimes which eventually serve world Zionism and Israel.

Al Dustour said that the Casablanca summit would remain meaningless unless its decisions concerning Afghanistan, Bosnia and Iraq are put into force. The 52 countries which issued the resolutions will be required to take practical action in ending the bloodshed in Afghanistan, the Serbian aggression on Bosnia and lift the sanctions on Iraq, said the daily.

Without the implementation of these resolutions, the Organisation of Islamic Conference would remain a futile organisation, said the daily.

Tareq Masarweh said Israel's refusal to pave the ground for elections in the Palestinian lands constitutes a retreat from the Oslo agreement. The writer, in Al Ra'i daily, said that abandoning the Oslo and Cairo agreements would mean that Israel would not withdraw its forces from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and would allow the Jewish settlers to continue committing their crimes against the Palestinians. The writer said that Israel was using the peace treaties with the Arabs as traps prior to imposing their will on the Arab countries.

EU poised for major changes in the new year

By Jeremy Gaunt
Reuters

BRUSSELS — The European Union faces major changes next year as it welcomes in three countries, appoints a brand new executive and loses two of the men who have shaped Europe's direction for more than a decade.

In some ways, the EU will never be the same again.

"It is a big question mark for everybody," said one Brussels-based official.

Austria, Sweden and Finland will raise the EU's numbers to 15 when they enter on Jan. 1 following successful referendums earlier this year.

Their presence will make the union bigger and richer and stretch its boundaries as far north as the Arctic Circle and as far east as Russia.

Jacques Santer, the low-profile prime minister of Luxembourg, will take over an enlarged, 20-member European commission, more than half of them new.

"Lots of people with... lots of political thinking behind them," said one EU diplomat of the new EU executive that will include the likes of former French Prime Minister Edith Cresson and former British Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock.

Mr. Santer will replace Jacques Delors, the high-profile architect of Europe's single market and a pioneer of economic and monetary union who is leaving after 10 years in the post.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl said last week Mr. Delors had been the "soul of the (European) enterprise for a decade."

It is doubtful whether Mr. Santer, a pragmatist to Delors' philosopher king, either could or would want to fill the role.

Also leaving the EU stage is Francois Mitterrand who is retiring after 14 years as president of France. With Mr. Kohl, Mr. Mitterrand has called many of the shots in Europe over the past decade.

The combination of the three changes has set EU diplomats and officials wondering about what is to come and how the changing of the guard will effect the EU's 1996 inter-governmental conference to review the role and power of EU institutions.

But that is over the long haul. In the short term, there is widespread consensus that it is the arrival of the three new countries that will bring the most immediate, and most noticeable, change.

In statistical terms, they will lift the EU population by

nearly 22 million to close to 370 million and increase its gross domestic product by between seven and eight per cent.

They will also push the EU further eastwards, where preparations to incorporate former communist countries into the union is already under way.

EU diplomats and officials say, however, the real impact of the newcomers — particularly the Nordic ones — will be in the policies they bring to EU meetings.

"Their vote will be for maximum transparency, for budget discipline," said one diplomat, referring to the Nordic countries' penchant for rigorous openness. Sweden and Finland are expected to join forces with northern countries as free traders.

Together, the diplomat said, Germany, Britain, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland will have enough votes in EU decision-making meetings to block anti-dumping measures they think protectionist.

The two Nordic countries, possibly with Austria too, are also expected to fight hard for stringent environmental standards in the union.

"There is one headline about the environment policy of the union every day in every Nordic country," said an EU official.

They will also push welfare-oriented social policies, diplomats say, and, in Sweden's case, argue for a reform of the EU's highly subsidised agricultural system.

While a certain amount is known about what the newcomers will bring, the other changes raise more questions than they answer.

The new commission, for example, contains a number of high-ranking and accomplished politicians likely to want to make their mark.

Mr. Santer, however, comes from within a group of EU leaders known to want to rein in the executive that Mr. Delors turned into the closest thing to an EU government.

The absence of Mr. Delors and Mr. Mitterrand from the European scene, meanwhile, may have far more long-term implications for the EU than either the new members or the new commission.

With Mr. Delors eschewing a run for the French presidency, the new French leader will now almost certainly pay more heed to Euro-sceptics within the country.

That would be a sea change for the European Union as well as France.

LETTERS

Awareness, public debate needed

To the Editor:

With great interest I have followed the responses to your article on sexual harassment of Nov. 22. This is an issue which has been accepted quietly for too long in Jordan, and it is good to see that people feel strongly about it. However, there was occasionally the implication that women are in a way responsible for the sexual harassment they are subject to. In particular, Hassan Tayyem in his letter "We are all responsible" (Jordan Times Dec. 13, 1994) writes that "a great number of women are not conservative or at least moderate in their attire, appearance, hair style and quantity and quality of perfumes" which he says invites harassment.

I would just like to point out that this way of thinking blames the victim for the crime. Just like saying that a woman deserved to be raped because "she asked for it." The statistics on incest and the rape of children and women over the 70 should speak for themselves.

Sexual harassment is a form of verbal and mental rape which has nothing to do with the receiver, but only with the wish of the offender to debase, insult and offend someone who is perceived to be in a more vulnerable position. Men who sexually harass women are insecure and often feel powerless and weak. Just like exhibitionists, they revel in the shock and anger of their victims, which makes them feel powerful for a moment and offers them a cheap thrill. Verbal harassment also reflects the deep-felt resentments of a patriarchal society towards women who are infiltrating what used to be male-dominated terrain, such as the university, the work place, and even the street! It does not matter what a woman wears or does not wear because her mere presence is enough to initiate harassment.

I would also like to refer to Mr. Tayyem's statement that "we are not in other liberal countries who consider sexual harassment something normal."

From my experience in living in "liberal" countries, which usually condemn sexual harassment in all its forms and have strong laws against it, I can say that I have never been harassed or felt uncomfortable in a public place, in any of those places, the way I feel uncomfortable stepping out of the house in Jordan, my own home country.

I think this serious problem should be given the attention it deserves by the authorities. A public debate followed by an awareness campaign might uncover the reasons for this problem and help solve it. The women of Jordan would surely appreciate it.

Costina Hadidi,
Amman.

كندا من الوطن

Imam sees greater understanding of Islam in U.S. military

By Joanne L. Nix
U.S. Information Agency

larities between the taxi violence and political clashes of the past. "You may even find that some individuals become dependent on the conflict, depending on people hiring them."

May 12-25, marked the high point of Capt. Mohammad's first year as chaplain. He performed the Haj. "I wish I could tell you all of it,"

According to the Armed Forces Chaplain Board, the total number of Muslims in the military is hard to determine because enlistees are not required to list their religious preference. But the

Iman Mohammad noted that the presence of Muslims in the U.S. armed forces increased following the Gulf war after U.S. service members stationed in the Middle East worked alongside Egyptian, Saudi and other Muslim coalition forces. And, he said, many Americans, himself included, became Muslims after they were inspired by the teachings of Malcolm X, the American Muslim leader of the early 1960s and by the 1992 biographical film, "Malcolm X," directed by Spike Lee.

The chaplain admitted that although he has made real progress, there is still much that needs to be done. Some of the concerns he still must address are matters of dietary regulations, prayers and religious observances.

Concerning dietary laws, Imam Mohammad was pleased to report that the Department of Defense agreed to provide vegetarian MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) for Muslim troops in Haiti. He said that following its research on multi-faith rations, "the military is now providing multi-faith vegetarian products and vendors from private industry are also considering the distribution of "halal" meals for observant Muslim service members worldwide."

Asked about Muslim women in the Armed Forces who wish to follow the tradi-

tional female Islamic dress code including the "hejab," Mohammad replied: "The American Muslim Council is working on that issue. I have referred that matter to them (and) it will have to go up through the Department of Defence. Wearing the "hejab" is not mandatory," he explained, "but it is a symbol of Muslim identity and sends a unified message (to non-Muslims) in the armed services. As long as it does not (impede work, women) can wear it."

One of Capt. Mohammad's most ambitious goals is to establish suitable sites for worship by Muslims on U.S. army installations. He explained that although the

armed forces do not build individual religious structures in order to preserve religious equality, "the American Muslim Council has (agreed) to using the (post) chapel as a multi-faith facility. As long as the chapel can be used for prayers in the form they are performed (by Muslims), it will be acceptable."

The imam has been invited to discuss Ramadan, Islam's holiest month, at an in-service training session at Fort Bragg in January. He also plans to train chaplain's assistants to set up various services including the Jumaah

prayer and the two Eid services.

In addition, Capt. Mohammad reported that he is occasionally invited to explain how Islam is perceived. His chief topics, he says, are "the stereotyping that continues (in) the western press (and) raising awareness among service members of the plight of Muslims throughout the world, particularly in Bosnia and Somalia."

Chaplain Mohammad holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Anthropology from New York State University, and two Master's degrees — one in Counseling Education from San Diego State University, California, and one in Social Work from the Uni-

In 1982 he enlisted in the army has a chaplain's assistant and has also worked as a chaplain with Muslim populations in the New York State Department of Correctional Services.

After he completed his training at the army's chaplain's School at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, Capt. Mohammad was stationed with his family at Fort Lee, Virginia. In his current military assignment, he counsels and conducts religious services for more than 100 Muslim soldiers.

Turkey fights odds to clean up with natural gas

By Suna Erdem
Reuter

becoming unbearable — but because installation is expensive people are shying away and turning to cheap, bad quality coal,” said Aysel Atimtay, specialist in air pollution at Ankara’s Middle East Technical University.

It costs about \$500 to convert to natural gas in the capital of Ankara. The average monthly wage is \$195. Officials at the state pipeline company Botas, which buys and transports natural gas, said austerity had also hit them.

"At the moment our hands are a bit tied — we get no money from the state after the austerity measures," said one Bora official. "We have also lost about \$1.5 billion in four years since the oil line from Iraq was closed after the Gulf war."

Other officials said Botas still had enough turnover to invest, albeit less than hoped. They instead urged better organisation of municipal bodies and state firms and said inconsistency and a short-term attitude in successive administrations had also played their part in slowing conversion from coal to gas.

Natural gas reaches households in three cities in Turkey and is supplied to industry in four.
The capital of Ankara.

once covered in a black shadow of smog each winter, was cleaned up between 1989 and 1993, when Deputy Prime Minister Murat Karayalcin was mayor.

With some 450,000 households linked up to the network, the drive in Ankara, which has about 700,000

households all told, has lost impetus. Its new mayor protests at heavy debt incurred under Karayalcin.

But it is in Istanbul where the need is now most pressing. Since 1987, Istanbul Municipality's Natural Gas Department (IGDAS) has been trying to persuade people to switch.

IGDAS deputy head fuat Sengul said 600,000 Istanbul households, about a quarter of the total, had natural gas lines at their doorsteps — but only 260,000 had hooked up.

Those not scared off by installation costs, fear prices, currently lower than for other fuels, may rise swiftly as gas is imported and costs are linked to an ever-rising dollar.

"They are also afraid that Russia might cut off gas, leaving them without heat-

ing," said a Botas official. "We guarantee that won't happen, but they take some persuading."

On Nov. 30, Russian natural gas supplies to Turkey via Ukraine were stopped for a day when Kiev tapped the pipeline to increase its share. Botas met supplies from its liquefied natural gas depots.

Botas is continuing talks to buy 40 billion cubic metres of natural gas annually from countries in the region by

Engineers and Botas officials say the constant flow of migrants from rural areas into shanty towns around Ankara and Istanbul is also a huge problem and upsets plans.

"Shanty towns just add to the burden — you can't even get into the narrow alleys to lay pipes," a Botas official

"The problem in Istanbul is very hard to tackle because each year the population increases by 500,000," said Sengul.






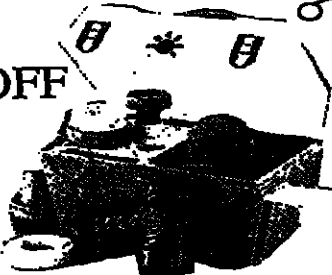

IGDAS held a campaign in August and September offering a 20 per cent reduction and 100 cubic metres of natural gas, a month's supply, free to people who converted

It is now offering 250 cubic metres free to those converting in line with a recent demand from Istanbul governorate that all industrial and trade facilities, plus blocks of flats with central heating, turn to gas by the end of December.



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Saudi Arabia, billions in debt, considers swap for bonds

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia is considering converting debts to bonds or other paper to clear billions of dollars in arrears to contractors and suppliers, financial sources have said.

"The government is looking to clear those (arrears) up in one fell swoop," a banker said.

The amount involved is billions of dollars, one estimate was about \$5 billion — which the government would not be able to come up with easily from normal revenues when it is trying to balance the budget and avoid falling further behind.

Saudi Arabia is many months behind in payments to some contractors, causing painful cash crunches and worries for some foreign workers, including doctors and nurses, the sources said. Bankers said the Saudi government and its public sector companies and agencies have accumulated total debt of close to \$85 billion — about 70 per cent of gross domestic product.

They said that is not far off line by international standards but a huge jump from about 16 per cent in 1988. The 1990-91 Gulf war cost

the government \$55 billion, drawing down assets and pushing up the debt load.

With the boost in oil prices in the second half of 1994 some fairly large payments to contractors have been possible.

But to some companies the government was only up to date until end-1993 and to others possibly not even that current, the bankers said. The payment delays were not uniform across all ministries and to all firms, with some delays much shorter.

The initiative to securitize debt through converting to paper appears to have come primarily from banks, eager to apply techniques applied in many Western economies to try to solve problems of clients struggling to keep current on loan payments.

The sources said the authorities have made no commitment at all to securitize their arrears, and because of the complexity of doing so it would probably take a time to put in place.

"It is at a very embryonic stage," one source said.

They point out that Saudi Arabia's capital market is fledgling. Little trade takes

place in development bonds, with banks tending to hold them to their two-to-five year maturities.

"I really question whether it's do-able," said one banker, adding that a trading environment would be needed where whatever securities are created can be traded back and forth.

In the absence of an active secondary market, if a company were given development bonds, he pointed out, it might still be short of cash even if bonds would at least guarantee interest.

Another believed it would be possible for the banks to buy the security from the company, even if there were no developed bond market, thus providing liquidity to the company and placing its loan portfolio on a more solid footing.

One route other than giving government bonds would be simply to guarantee payment by a certain date, which would make the receivables much more attractive to the banks than they are now.

"If the government could find a way to guarantee payments by a specific date, it would enable the banks to

purchase receivables from their customers," he said.

Meanwhile, the determination of cash-strapped Saudi Arabia to cut spending and end years of government financial profligacy has become clear in the run-up to its 1995 budget, financial analysts have said.

The latest confirmation came in a presentation to King Fahd by Governor Hamad Saud Al Sayari of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency — the central bank — speaking of the need for "sacrifices and additional efforts in the short term."

Coming four days after the king himself spoke of budget cuts, the remarks reinforced the impression that Saudi Arabia was set on getting a grip on its finances after more than a decade of budget deficits, the analysts said.

"It reconfirms that this government clearly has the capacity to exert fiscal discipline and they will exert this to the degree required to balance the budget," said Kevin Taacker, chief economist at Saudi American Bank in Riyadh.

The precise details of the 1995 budget are not due to be

revealed before Dec. 31, but it has now become clear that further cuts in some areas are expected and the government will also seek to increase its revenue.

"I think the main intention is to prepare the people for another difficult year in 1995. I think it's a good thing," a Western diplomat commented. "It's a sign the Saudis are facing up to their problems."

Already pressure has been taken off the Saudi rial, which speculators have frequently attacked on the assumption that weak oil revenues would force the government to devalue it.

The spot rial has strengthened and some of the premium of rial interbank deposit rates over comparable dollar levels has declined as operators reduced their long dollar positions since the king's remarks.

"Some" big positions against the rial have been unwound (liquidated)," a banker noted.

The extra effort in 1995 will be required for two reasons, analysts say.

First, there appears to be a gap of several billion dollars

— though much reduced from 1993's estimated \$12 billion — between actual spending and revenues in 1994 despite the goal of a balanced budget.

Second, discipline will be needed to counter natural spending rises in some areas. Interest payments, for example, will be higher due to the global rise in rates. And even if the wage structure is frozen, wages still rise as employees are promoted.

One banker calculated the budget at the projected spending levels for 1994 could be balanced with an average price of North Sea benchmark Brent crude at \$17 a barrel. So far this year Brent has averaged a little less than the current \$15.90.

Economists are divided on the chances of Brent improving to an average of \$17 next year, some pointing to OPEC's decision to maintain output despite higher demand but others pointing to the spectre of Iraq eventually returning to the market.

But they say any doubts about oil revenue show the value of turning to other sources such as higher utility rates or higher airfares.

Japan's per capita GDP world's highest in 1993

TOKYO (R) — Japan had the world's highest value of output per head of population for the first time in 1993, knocking Switzerland out of the top spot, a government agency said Friday.

It rose to \$33,764 per head from \$29,478 the previous year, the Economic Planning Agency (EPA) said in a report.

The figure, per capita gross domestic product (GDP), was the highest among the 25 members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The year's strength boosted the value of dollar-based per capita GDP in 1993, the EPA said. Switzerland took second place with per capita GDP worth \$33,746.

Japan's nominal GDP, or total output of goods and services minus net income from overseas production,

rose to \$4.21 trillion in 1993 from \$3.66 trillion in 1992, ranking second only to the United States among OECD members, it said.

Meanwhile, the combined value of Japan's visible and financial assets rebounded in 1993 after falling in 1992, the first slippage since the EPA started records in 1955.

Gross asset value totalled 6,981 trillion yen (\$69.81 trillion) at the end of 1993, up 0.8 per cent from a year earlier, it said.

The value of Japan's land assets continued to fall sharply in 1993, although that of stock assets posted the first year-on-year gain in four years, the EPA said.

Japan was hit hard by drastic falls in both land and stock assets in the early 1990s after the bursting of the bubble economy of inflated stock and land prices of the late 1980s.

Clinton offers middle class a 'bill of rights'

WASHINGTON (R) — Bill Clinton fought to reinstate his presidency Thursday with a \$60 billion tax-cut plan, part of a "middle-class bill of rights" aimed at U.S. voters who deserted his Democrats in droves in elections last month.

In a televised speech designed to portray him as the true champion of working Americans and outflank the new Republican majority in Congress, Democrat Clinton proposed a package of tax breaks for families with annual incomes of up to \$120,000 to help offset child-rearing, college tuition, home-buying and catastrophic medical expenses.

"More jobs aren't enough. We have to raise incomes," he said. "I challenge the new Congress to work with me to enact the middle class 'bill of rights.'"

Mr. Clinton said the tax cuts in his four-point-plan

would be paid through major reductions in five federal agencies and a two-year extension of a freeze on discretionary government spending now set to expire in 1998.

"I know some people just want to cut the government blindly, and I know that's popular now," he said in an obvious reference to his Republican opponents. "But I won't do it. I want a leaner, not meaner, government."

In a 10-minute speech from the Oval Office, sounding somber and looking crisply formal in a dark blue suit, Mr. Clinton insisted that he would brush aside 1996 presidential reelection worries because "that's in your hands."

"My rule for the next two years will be, country first and politics-as-usual dead last," he stressed.

While taxes and economics were the subject of the speech — as the president

tried to catch up with the Republicans and even independent-minded Democrats on the tax-cut issue — politics and reelection were the unspoken heart of it.

Mr. Clinton's presidency is in serious trouble, as witness the stunning Republican sweep of both houses of Congress and most state governorships in the Nov. 8 elections. Recent opinion polls show Mr. Clinton's job ratings slumping below a 40 per cent approval rate.

The timing alone — a sober presidential address prompted by no particular external crisis on the verge of the Christmas holiday — underscored the urgency of the speech. Accordingly, nationwide curiosity was high on how Mr. Clinton would fare and whether he could start righting himself.

"It's what he had to do to reshape the debate on terms

to help bring the country together and really focus his resources ... (on) restoring the American dream," said Al From, president of the centrist Democratic Leadership Council.

But the Republicans said Mr. Clinton's plan looked much like theirs, and pledged to work with him to enact legislation only if his new position was based on "real conviction."

"If the president's new position tonight represents a real change of heart, we say, 'welcome aboard,'" said Fred Thompson, the new Republican senator from Tennessee swept into office on the anti-Democrat tide. Mr. Thompson gave the televised Republican response to Mr. Clinton.

The centerpiece of Mr. Clinton's tax cut plan was a provision that would let families with annual incomes of

up to \$120,000 write off up to \$10,000 in college tuition expenses each year.

It would also give families with incomes of up to \$75,000 a year a tax credit of up to \$800 for each child under age 12. It would raise the income ceiling for tax-deferred individual retirement accounts to \$100,000 per family and allow penalty-free withdrawals for tuition payments, catastrophic medical expenses,

home purchases and care of elderly parents.

"We can pay for this middle class 'bill of rights' by continuing to reduce government spending, including subsidies to powerful interests," Mr. Clinton said.

Resulting savings would finance the five-year, \$60 billion cost of the tax cuts and there would be \$16 billion left over to further reduce the federal deficit, he said.



Perfume for men launched

Astra establishment for Commercial Agencies Thursday held a training course for the sales staff at cosmetics outlets and pharmacies, during which the marketing director, Fredy Fais, introduced a new perfume for men, "State-ment," from Etienne Aigner.

Mr. Fais said "State-ment" is a unique, exciting, reliable and full of life perfume.

He said that Aigner products are well-received in Europe and the Middle East.

Astra Director General Inad Al Tayah welcomed Mr. Fais and thanked the audience for their cooperation.

Tanzania, hit by aid freeze, in financial crisis

DAR ES SALAAM (R) — An aid ban imposed on Tanzania by leading donors has hit its coffers so hard the reformist government has been forced to borrow \$40 million from commercial banks, a minister has said.

Finance Minister Jakaya Kikwete told Reuters in an interview the borrowing had in turn fuelled inflation and thrown the East African country's economic recovery programme out of gear.

"We are off track. The government's performance

was not good in the last three months," the minister said shortly before he left for Paris to attend a donors' consultative group meeting.

Mr. Kikwete, 45, was referring to a freeze of up to \$35 million in balance of payments support imposed last month by Finland, Sweden and Norway, Tanzania's leading traditional donors.

The three countries cited concern at official reports that rampant tax evasion cost the country \$125 million last year. Other Western donors

followed suit and withheld undisclosed amounts of dollars in badly-needed aid.

Tanzania launched an investigation into the evasion, fired the senior civil servant in charge of revenue and transferred former finance minister Kigoma Malima to a less important portfolio in a bid to appease the donors who underwrite annual aid of up to \$800 million.

How donors view the latest action by President Ali Hassan Mwinyi will only become clear at the Paris meeting

during which time Tanzania's economic conduct will come under close scrutiny.

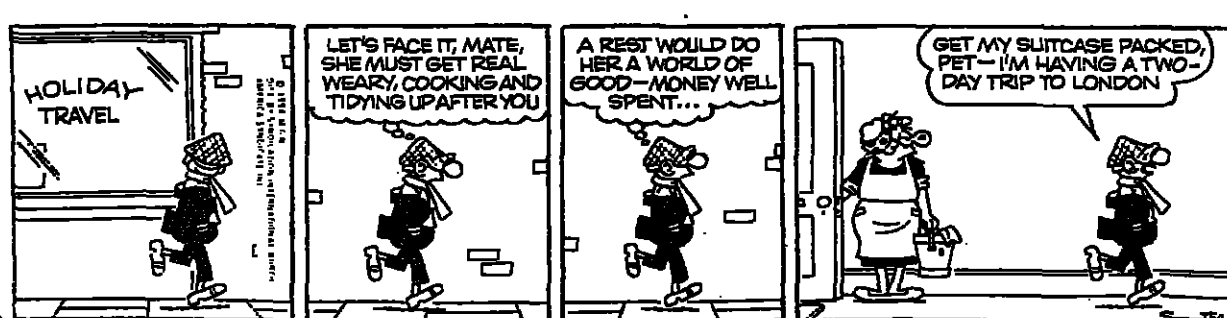
Mr. Kikwete said he was still investigating the tax evasion racket and promised his top priority at the ministry he took control of last week would be efficient tax collection.

He said he would review the country's fiscal policies. "Maybe the structure is poor or maybe the tariffs are too high to the extent that they encourage evasion," he said.

Peanuts



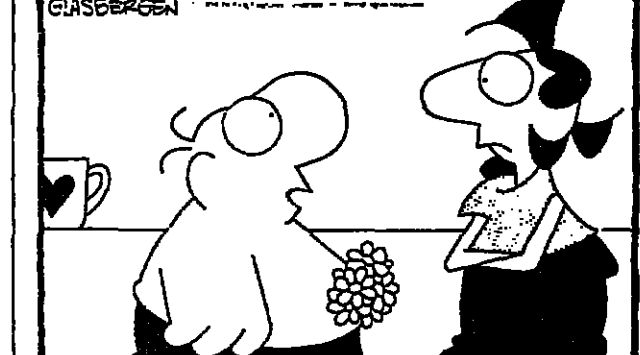
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff

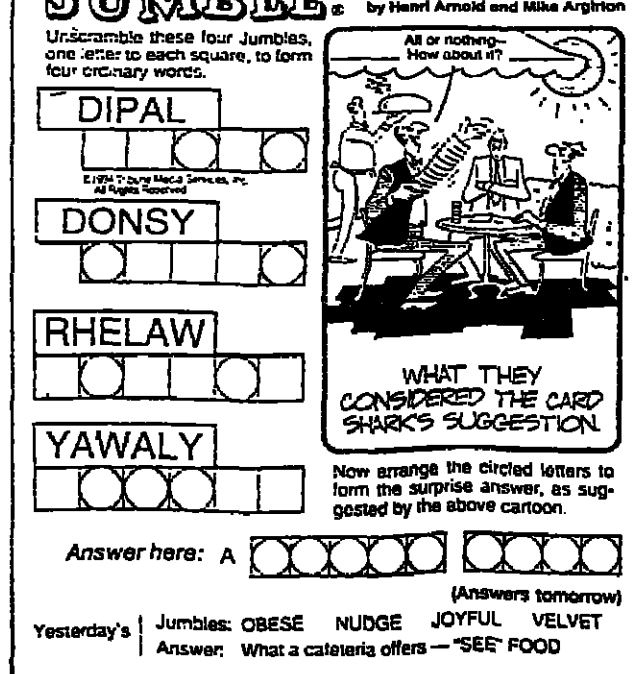


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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1994
By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll Wright Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: The full moon today in Gemini comes with a double moon opposition this evening which limits and restricts your activities. Don't fight any unexpected changes in your schedule.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Your associates are very important to you and you can now come to a fine agreement. Provided you don't get into any outside operations.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Study the tasks at hand and use the newest mechanisms so that you can save time and energy, so you can be more productive and harmonious.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Delve into inexpensive entertainment only and you have a good time. Use good judgement in dealing with your male on any proposed activities.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Some changes at home could prove costly so think twice about making them. Entertain close friends at home tonight.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You may find it difficult to get your activities completed today, but use care and all works out well. A fellow associate has an idea which is good for you.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Forget the financial restrictions for now and get repairs completed which are necessary to your home and have more order around you.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Your judgement about some fundamental affairs is not apt to be good today, so get ideas and advice from others who can trust.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You are anxious to gain data you need for a project but you cannot do so now. It is important that you are very kind with your mate.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is not a good day for handling monetary matters but fine for gaining personal aims, if you go after them. Enjoy good friends.

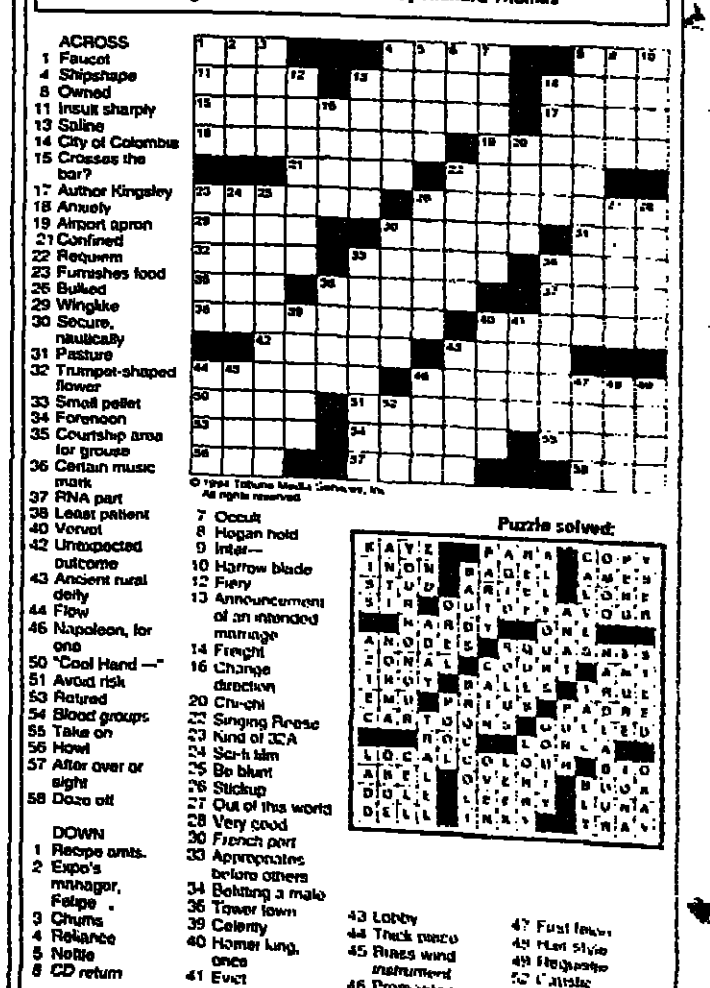
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Listen to the advice of experts today since your own judgment is not up to par. Attend some fine social event in the evening with your mate.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) New ideas come to your attention, but study them well before accepting the results. Don't let a private anxiety slow you down.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your hunches are not good now so use your good judgement in whatever may turn up unexpectedly for you to gain your success.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise - Zircon

THE Daily Crossword by Richard Thomas



1st Division Basketball Championship

Ahli thrash Orthodoxi to retain 3rd consecutive title

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Al Ahli were Thursday crowned Jordan's basketball champions for the record 22nd time when they retained their third consecutive basketball title by scoring a convincing 82-65 win over Al Orthodoxi in the final match of the First Division Championship.

While Al Ahli mainly depended on their veteran players, an abundant lineup of younger teammates were more than ready to represent their team. That however was not the case with the former champions whose undermanned team was heavily exposed. Leading scorer Hilal Barakat was closely guarded by his opponents and his teammates were unable to fill the gap; their scoring was limited and consequently settled for second place after allowing Al Ahli to set the pace in the match attended by over 2,000 fans at Amman's Sports Palace.

Al Ahli had won the first round encounter 79-70, and needed to repeat their win to retain their title. Al Orthodoxi could have prolonged the competition had they won the match to force a title-deciding best of three rounds.

However, Al Orthodoxi's form Thursday was not reminiscent of the years

when they had a virtually undisputed reign on the Kingdom's basketball scene, from 1976-1989, before losing the crown to Al Ahli in 1990.

Al Orthodoxi's only lead was at 10-9 after a three-pointer by Hilal Barakat in the sixth minute.

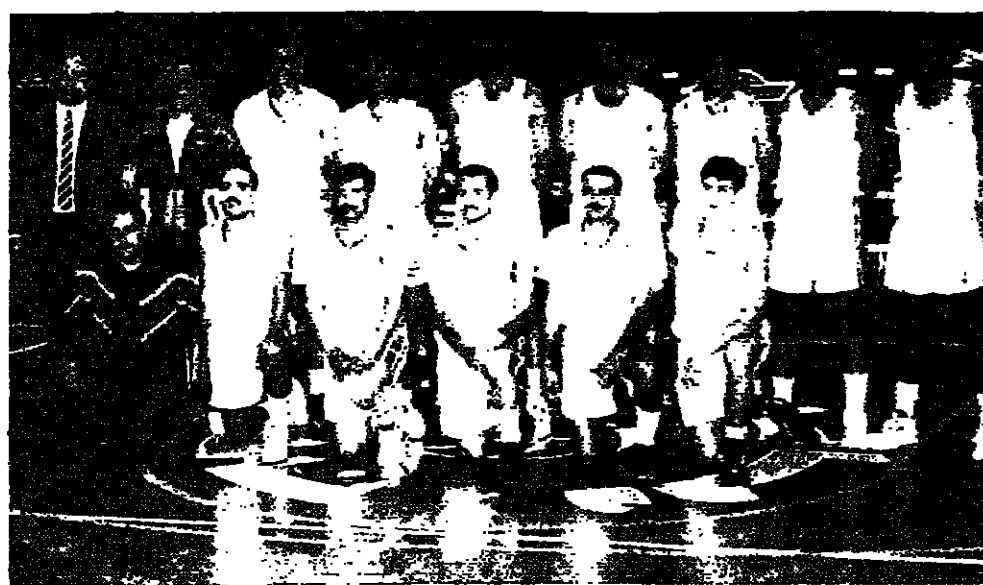
From that minute, Ramez Hammoudeh played one of his best matches and scored with Naser Bushnaq and Yousef Zaghloul to give his team a 25-19 lead before a three-pointer by Marwan Ma'touq put their lead at 28-21.

Bushnaq was substituted by Marwan Al Saeedi who closely guarded Barakat. Jan Sahlieh scored a three-pointer and netted another basket for Al Orthodoxi to reduce the gap to 34-30.

Al Ahli ended the first half 40-34.

Al Ahli's captain Samir Murqus, who has hinted that this season might be his last, netted a three pointer as did Sami Sadul-din, both scoring 10 consecutive points, including a spectacular reverse layup by the agile Sadul-din at the beginning of the second half, to give their team a 53-38 lead.

Muntaser Abul Tayyeb, who has not appeared in his usual form, answered back with a three-pointer of his own but later gained his fourth personal foul which greatly hampered his de-



Al Ahli's team

fensive capability. Another three-pointer by Ma'touq gave Al Ahli a 60-44 lead as the tideholders took an irreversible lead and seemed set to win the match.

Al Ahli's Mohammad Al Shamali, who was not given much playing time this season, netted six consecutive points, as did Al Orthodoxi's brilliant playmaker Jihad Saliba who cleverly

penetrated Al Ahli's defenses based on individual skills rather than a preset playing strategy or teamwork effort.

Al Ahli led 68-51 before Barakat and Saliba added seven points and tried to apply a press defence which was easily countered by Al Ahli's faster players.

Al Ahli's Zaghloul, Bushnaq, and Murqus outscored their opponents 6-1 in two minutes and Hammoudeh captivated fans with the match's sole slam dunk to lead 78-61 and seal the match with an 82-65 win.

FINAL STANDINGS

	P	W	L	SF	SA	Pts.
Ahli	12	12	—	1238	670	24
Orthodoxi	12	10	2	1140	723	22
Jazireh	12	8	4	928	813	20
Jalil	12	6	6	707	815	18
Watani	12	3	9	815	1083	15
Husseini*	12	3	9	759	1045	15
Homentmen*	12	—	12	508	1020	10

* Relegated to 2nd division.

Weary U.S. fans wary of baseball reprieve

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Major League club owners granted baseball a seven-day grace period, but it remains to be seen if the pre-Christmas reprieve will be enough to salvage the 1995 season.

Strike weary fans are still skeptical, believing the machinations of both players and owners betray a lack of concern for a game that has been a source of joy to Americans for 125 years.

Players have lost touch with the real world and the owners never cared about the fans," said long-time fan Mike Devine of Portland, Oregon. "This is all about money and power."

"I am not willing to ignore a game I grew up with. But what I won't do is attend a game for a while. It's the only power we have as fans," he said.

On Thursday, owners voted to postpone implementation of a salary cap for seven days, saying they hoped to reach an agreement with striking players, and get the 1995 season back on track.

But owners still say they need salary limits, and players are still viscerally opposed to them.

If an extra week of talks yields no progress, owners say they will impose the cap, and players say they will take the matter to court in what would be a long, bitter legal battle.

Players would appeal to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), charging owners with failure to bargain in good faith. They would seek a legal injunction against the salary cap during a two-month NLRB investigation.

A hearing before an administrative law judge could come in March, around the time players would be expected to report for spring training before the 1995 season. Few are expected to cross picket lines if a salary cap is in place.

Players went on strike on August 12, wiping out the last 52 days of the season and forcing the cancellation of the World Series for the first time since 1994.

The shut-down and four months of failed talks have made baseball fans bitter. Sales of souvenir clothing are down 50 per cent.

Stock values on baseball card manufacturers have plunged as the public has quit purchasing collectibles. Official 1994 World Series baseballs, never used, are being offered at bargain prices, with few takers.

"Everybody is fed up with all the greed," said Frank Sullivan, a Cleveland Indians' season ticket holder who founded a fans' protest group. "What they all forget is that the buck stop with the fans."

Baseball, which once enjoyed near-mythical status as it was handed down from parents to children, has become a disappointment to many of those who loved the game most.

"It's difficult to measure the damage, but it will be harmful," said Boston Red Sox owner John Harrington, the owners' top negotiator.

An epic legal fight is still possible before lawyers and judges do what millionaire owners and players could not — find a formula to divide the spoils in what had been a billion-dollar per year industry.



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Ondieki refuses to run against Chinese

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australia's star long distance runner Lisa Ondieki has threatened to boycott next year's world athletics championships in Sweden if Chinese athletes compete.

Ondieki qualified for the Gothenburg event with an outstanding win in the Australian 10,000 metres championship in Melbourne on Thursday night. She then expressed deep reservations about the all-conquering Chinese women.

"I would not waste my time by going to compete against women running junior men's times," said Ondieki, who less than a month ago finished third in the Tokyo Marathon.

"It's a joke that a woman can run 29m30s for the 10,000m. If they get rid of them (the Chinese) it would be okay, otherwise it would be a waste of time."

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WITH CHAIR SHARIF & TAUHAN HUSCH

LEND A HELPING HAND

North-South declarer: South deals

NORTH
♠ 10 8 5
♥ J 5 3
♦ K J
♣ A Q 2

WEST
♠ 4 2
♥ 10 9 4 2
♦ Q 8 7 6 4
♣ A 7 6 3

EAST
♠ 9
♥ 10 9 4 2
♦ 10 5 3 2
♣ A J 9 8

SOUTH
♠ A K J 7 6 3
♥ A 8 7 6
♦ A 10 8
♣ A

The bidding:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
4 ♠ Pass 5 ♠ Pass

Opening lead: Ace of ♠

Defense is the most difficult facet of bridge. Each defender sees only half of the defense's total assets, so anything a defender can do to make partner's job easier should be seized when the opportunity arises. This deal was originally reported by Dr. George Rosenkrantz of Mexico City.

North-South declarer: South deals

♠ 10 8 5
♥ J 5 3
♦ K J
♣ A Q 2

♠ 4 2
♥ 10 9 4 2
♦ Q 8 7 6 4
♣ A 7 6 3

♠ 9
♥ 10 9 4 2
♦ 10 5 3 2
♣ A J 9 8

♠ A K J 7 6 3
♥ A 8 7 6
♦ A 10 8
♣ A

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Institute for Social and Economic Policy in the Middle East



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- have a minimum of seven (7) years of substantial professional experience in the fields of health or human services;
- hold a Bachelor's degree to apply to KSG; an MD or other advanced degrees related to public health to apply to HSPH and a demonstrated ability to perform well in a rigorous, inter-disciplinary academic program;
- demonstrate proficiency in English by a TOEFL score of 600 or higher for KSG and a score of 550 or higher for the HSPH. The exam must have been taken in the last two years. Candidates applying to KSG who have had at least four years of undergraduate education in an English speaking university are required to submit GRE scores instead of TOEFL scores. The GRE exam must be taken in the last five years. All candidates applying to HSPH are required to submit GRE scores of exams taken in the last two years.
- commit to returning to the Middle East to work in government and other public or voluntary sector organizations.

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Prospective applicants will receive a description of the program and a MEEF Preliminary Data Sheet which he or she may return to the Institute with an updated curriculum vitae.

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- The project is partially financed by (EIB).
- The project consists of the supply and installation of water supply pipes with diameter varying from 19mm to 400mm, total length about 181 km.
- Tender documents are available and may be examined and purchased the Government Tenders Directorate at the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in Amman: P.O.Box 1220 Tel. (+) 962 6 607 481, Fax (+) 962 6 606 751.
- The non-refundable fee for each set of tender documents will be JD 500.
- The latest date set for the purchase of tender documents by the eligible bidders is January 23rd, 1995.
- A prebid conference will be held at the Water Authority's main offices in Amman at 900 hour, Jordan local time, on Monday 23rd January 1995.
- Bids are due not later than 1200 hours, Jordan Local Time, on Saturday, February 4th, 1995, to the office of the Government Tenders Directorate.

Eng. George Haddad
Chairman/Central Tenders Committee
General Director/Government Tenders Directorate

J.S. fans wary of all reprieve

A hearing before an administrative law judge could come in March, around the time players would be expected to report for spring training. Few are expected to show up, but if a sale is made, the players would still be in place.

Players went on strike in August 12, wiping out the last four days of the season and forcing the cancellation of the World Series for the first time since 1991.

The shut down and for months of failed talks have made baseball fans wonder about the future of the sport.

Stock prices on baseball card manufacturers have plummeted, and the public has lost interest in the sport. Off-bally, however, are being offered at bargain prices with few bidders.

Verity is led up to the stadium, and the fans are seen to be disappointed. When they all leave, the back stop with the home plate is left empty.

Baseball, which once was a national pastime, is now a thing of the past. Parents of children, who once played the game, are now disappointed. Many of those who loved the game have died.

It is difficult to measure the damage, but it will be national, said Boston Red Sox owner John W. Harrington, the owners' representative.

An epic fight is going on between the owners and players, who are now in a state of war. The owners are trying to force the players to accept a new contract, but the players are refusing to do so.

The owners are trying to force the players to accept a new contract, but the players are refusing to do so.



Wale's Vinnie Jones centre seems to have a dance with his Bulgarian opponent during their European qualifying match. Bulgaria won 3-0 (AFP photo)

Germany take on Albania on home turf

BONN (R) — Germany plan to continue where they left off against Moldova in mid-week when they take on Albania in a European Championship qualifier in Kaiserslautern Sunday.

Coach Bernd Vogts is hoping his frontline trio of veteran Lothar Matthaus and strikers Ulf Kirsten and Juergen Klinsmann can repeat the impact they made on Wednesday when Germany's 3-0 win maintained their 100 per cent record in group seven.

Kirsten scored the first goal and set up Klinsmann for the second, while Matthaus, playing in defence but going forward at every opportunity, hit the third.

Borussia Dortmund striker Karlheinz Riedle, who missed the Moldova match, is suffering from a pulled shin muscle but is likely to be named as one of the substitutes.

Vogts told Germany's Bild newspaper the Moldova win showed the German team was back in form and recovering morale lost when it was dumped out of the World Cup finals by Bulgaria.

"I'm looking forward to it," he said. "We just have to pick up where we left off in Moldova."

Vogts is expected to name an unchanged line-up, but would not rule out possibility of bringing in local hero Stefan Kuntz if the K+ and K+ formula, as Klinsmann and Kirsten have been dubbed by the German press, proves to be a one-off.

Juventus defender Juergen Kohler is again likely to be missing Sunday. He is suffering from a painful right achilles tendon and Bayern Munich's Thomas Helmer is expected to retain his place.

Despite doomsayers, tennis is alive and well

The Associated Press

TENNIS DIDN'T DIE in 1994 after all, confounding the doomsayers ready to bury it.

The sport, in fact, looked more robust than it had in years, with record attendance and prizes, burgeoning rivalries, and promising new faces even as it witnessed an emotional farewell by Martina Navratilova, the most successful women's player in history.

Pete Sampras and Steffi Graf repeated as the No. 1 players, but each felt pressure mounting as the year wore on. Injuries took a toll on both, and they saw long-time rivals, Andre Agassi and Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, lift their own games for runs at the top spots in 1995.

Sampras played sublime tennis most of the year, capturing the Australian Open and Wimbledon to raise his total of 23 Grand Slam titles to five by age 23. Sampras won eight other tournaments, including the ATP Tour World Championship, and wound up with a record \$3.6 million in official prize money, plus \$1.2 million in bonus prizes, boosting his career earnings to more than \$16 million.

But a foot injury suffered in a Davis Cup match right after Wimbledon sidelined Sampras for the next six weeks until the start of the U.S. Open. Sampras literally staggered out of exhaustion after losing in five sets to Jaime Yzaga, and that opened the way for Agassi.

Agassi, who drifted down to No. 24 in the rankings at the end of last year, entered the U.S. Open unseeded. But he came in fitter and sharper than he'd been since winning his only other Grand Slam title, Wimbledon in 1992. Under the tutelage of savvy fellow player Brad Gilbert, Agassi also suddenly played smarter and more consistent tennis. It all resulted in a stunning romp to the championship that included a record five victories over seeded players.

Agassi went on to rocket to No. 2 in the rankings with five titles, the best of his career, and is in position to overtake Sampras for the top spot as early as next April.



Arantxa Sanchez Vicario

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Boris Becker didn't win any major titles, but he played well enough to rise to No. 3 at year's end, followed by Sergi Bruguera, who won his second straight French Open.

A week after the U.S. Open, the tennis world was shocked by the accidental death of 40-year-old Vitas Gerulaitis from a faulty heating system's gas leak at the home of a friend in the New York city suburbs. The gregarious Gerulaitis, once

one of the game's best players, had become an insightful and humorous tennis announcer. His popularity spanned generations, from former coach and U.S. Open Champion Fred Stolle to John McEnroe, Jimmy Connors, Bjorn Borg and Guillermo Vilas, to young players like Sampras. Gerulaitis and Sampras played golf together just a few days before the tragedy.

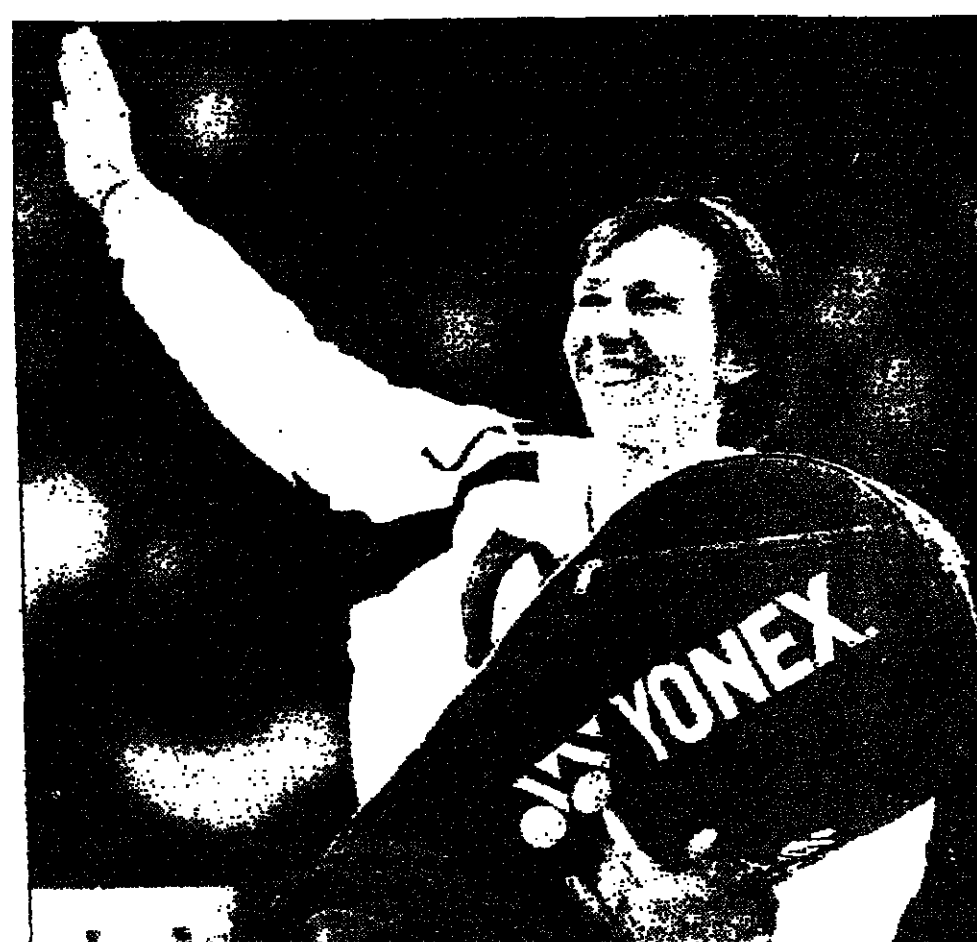
In women's tennis, the sport thrived on Arantxa Sanchez Vicario's blossoming rivalry with Graf, who started the year by winning the Australian Open for her 15th Grand Slam title and ended it struggling with chronic back trouble.

Sanchez Vicario, becoming obsessed with reaching No. 1 at last, sought out the help of a sports psychologist, a nutritionist and a new trainer, and went on to win the French and U.S. Opens — the latter with a dramatic three-set triumph over Graf in the finals.

Sanchez Vicario finished the year with \$2.9 million in prize money, more than double the amount Graf won. Sanchez Vicario also accumulated 5,299 points in the rankings to Graf's 4,592, but Graf had on to the No. 1 ranking with a slightly higher point average per tournament.

Sanchez Vicario's Spanish compatriot, Conchita Martinez, won Wimbledon for her first Grand Slam title, beating no less than Navratilova, the nine-time champion.

Simply reaching the final at



Martina Navratilova waves to the crowd following her farewell match

age 37 was an astounding achievement for Navratilova, justifying her decision to play one more year. With the silver runner-up plate looking so small in her hand, she stooped to pluck one last tiny patch of grass from Centre Court as a souvenir before leaving to a warm ovation.

Navratilova skipped the U.S. Open and retired at the Virginia Slims Championships in New York after losing in the first round to eventual winner Gabriela Sabatini, who captured her first title since the Italian

Open in 1992.

The sport continued to miss the presence of Monica Seles, the former No. 1 who has been out since she was stabbed in the back in Germany on April 30, 1993.

Jennifer Capriati, who dropped off the tour the U.S. Open in 1993 to return to high school, resurfaced under unfortunate circumstances in the spring when she was arrested at a Florida motel for marijuana possession. Capriati, 18, checked into a drug rehabilitation clinic, then moved with her family

to California to seek a fresh start. She played one match in November, losing to Anke Huber in Philadelphia, but planned to play a dozen tournaments in 1995, starting with the Australian Open.

Two very promising 14-year-olds entered the pro ranks late in the year. Martina Hingis of Switzerland and Venus Williams, an American whose family moved from California cross-country to Florida to enroll her and 13-year-old sister Serena in Rick Macci's Tennis Academy.

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Dudayev agrees to talk, demands Russian pullout

GROZNY (Agencies) — Separatist Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev accepted Russia's offer of peace negotiations Friday, but added an almost impossible condition — that Russian troops besieging the capital pull out.

In his three-point statement, Dudayev called for "an immediate cessation of hostilities," six days after Russian forces rolled into the tiny Muslim Caucasus republic to crush its three-year-old secessionist bid.

"All military forces must leave Chechen territory, after which we must rapidly begin talks at the highest level," Mr. Dudayev said in the written statement issued in the capital Grozny.

The condition was unlikely to be accepted by President Boris Yeltsin, who has staked much on forcing the republic to recognise itself as part of the Russian Federation.

Two of Yeltsin's aides told reporters in Moscow that he was likely to order a siege of Grozny and to clamp direct rule from Moscow on the rest of the republic.

Earlier Mr. Dudayev ordered his forces to pull back and avoid clashes with the estimated 25,000 to 40,000 Russian troops which have been involved in bitter clashes with separatist Chechen forces.

The mixed signals followed Yeltsin's offer late Thursday of high-level negotiations to avert all-out war and a 48-hour extension of the deadline for separatist fighters to surrender.

The old deadline ran out Thursday, and has now been extended to midnight Saturday (2100 GMT).

The three-column forces of Russian troops and tanks have been ordered to encircle Grozny, but Chechens were preparing for a bloody all-out assault on the city of about 400,000.

The president of Russia's Federation Council, the parliament's upper chamber, Friday called for a ceasefire in Chechnya as of 3:00 p.m. (1200 GMT) in a bid to ease the stand-off. There was only sporadic fighting in the afternoon.

Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin repeated the offer of holding talks

with the leaders of the break-away republic but warned of tough military action if they refused to negotiate.

He said he doubted Dudayev was ready to "begin real negotiations," and suggested the Chechen leader was only saying he was prepared to talk to win time.

Dudayev repeated his frequent warnings that Russia was playing with fire and risked provoking the turbulent Caucasus region into an uprising. "War in the Caucasus would involve a number of countries in the region and could spread much further," he said.

Several western media organisations, who received warnings from Russian military sources saying that journalists would be a target in the event of an offensive on the Chechnya capital, said they would withdraw photographers from Grozny Saturday.

Russian authorities in Moscow warned journalists they were staying in Grozny at their own risk and refused to deliver fresh accreditations.

Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev meanwhile called off a planned visit to Hungary next week, although no reason was given, Hungarian authorities said.

The Russian parliament has roundly criticised the intervention, but failed to suggest an alternative.

Yeltsin is considering ordering a total blockade of Grozny and imposing Russian rule on the rest of the territory while negotiations are underway, said two top Yeltsin aides at a press conference in Moscow.

A senior member of the defence commission in the Russian parliament said it would be impossible to sustain a prolonged military presence in Chechnya because of a shortage of money and the crisis condition of the Russian armed forces.

Moscow has been on a heightened security alert since the crisis began. On Friday, the wife of U.S. Vice President Al Gore, who was visiting Moscow, had to cancel a school visit after a telephone bomb threat.

Most countries have said they hope for as little bloodshed as possible, but that the

war is an internal Russian affair.

Mr. Gore said in Moscow after brief talks with Yeltsin: "We are following events in Chechnya. It is an internal Russian affair. We hope that it can be resolved through negotiations. It is an internal Russian affair."

But Estonian Foreign Minister Juri Luik slammed the operation, saying it could "affect the inner stability of Russia, and that will always cause problems for the neighbouring countries."

Saudi Arabia has also criticised the intervention in mostly Muslim Chechnya.

In Moscow Mr. Yeltsin escalated his criticism of Chechnya Friday, calling the rebel republic a "sinister" hotbed of crime that threatens Russia and the world at large.

"Chechnya is a powerful crime-breeding zone from where criminal elements operate throughout the country," said a statement issued by Mr. Yeltsin's office. Mr. Yeltsin is in a Moscow hospital, recuperating from nose surgery.

"One of the main reasons that forced the dispatch of troops to the Chechen Republic is the fact that (it) has turned in recent years into one of the most sinister centres not only of Russian, but also of world crime," Mr. Yeltsin's office said.

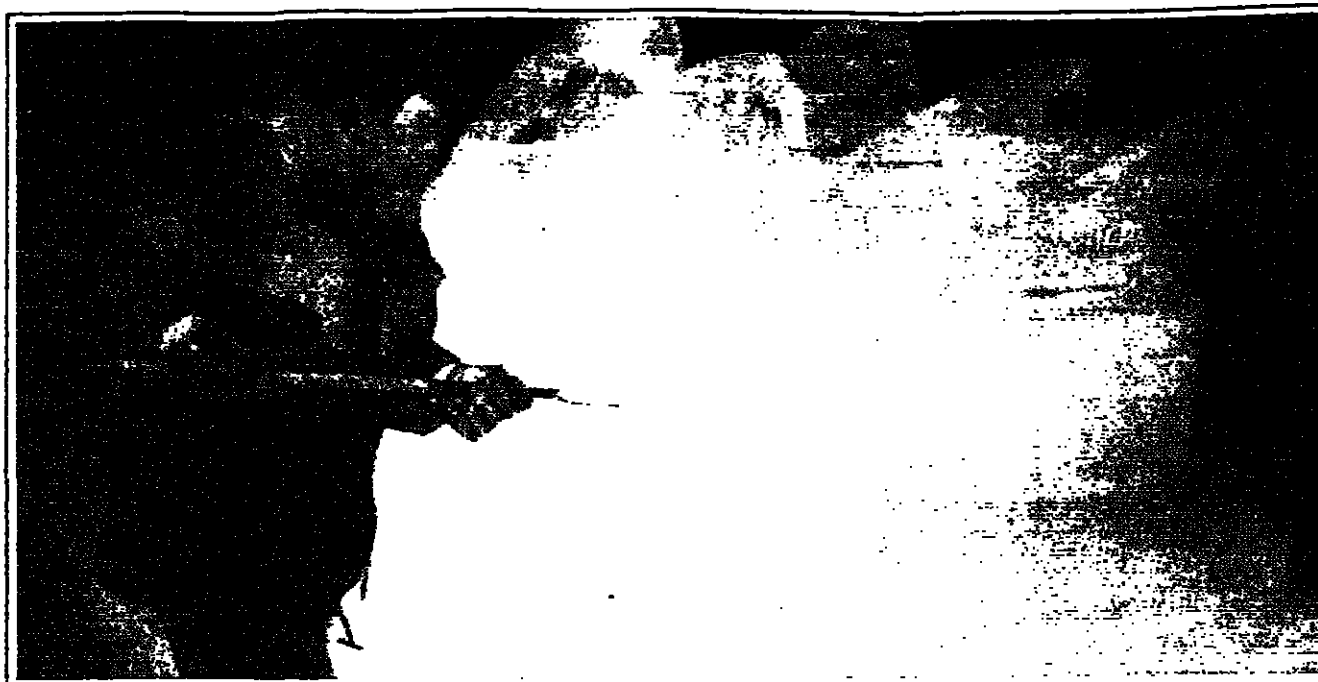
An estimated 10,000 to 40,000 Russian soldiers, supported by tanks, warplanes and helicopter gunships, rolled into Chechnya on Sunday.

The region of 1.2 million people, located 1,600 kilometres southeast of Moscow, declared independence in 1991, but Russia has refused to recognise its claim.

The statement issued by Mr. Yeltsin sought to rally public opinion, which has so far largely opposed military intervention in Chechnya.

Mr. Yeltsin's office also issued a memo by the interior ministry, which said ethnic Chechens were behind most heinous crimes in recent years. It also said Chechnya sheltered wanted criminals.

A total of 1,201 suspected Chechen criminals were wanted by Russian police, the ministry said.



FROZEN SPECTACULAR: Master ice sculptor An Qi Feng puts the finishing touches to an ice carving of the Sydney Opera House at The Frozen City exhibition in Sydney Friday. Created by 35 ice carvers from the city of Harbin in

China who used chainsaws and picks to cut 200 cubic metres of ice, the frozen spectacular is displayed inside the world's largest refrigerator (AFP photo)

Rabin: Iranian Scuds threaten Israelis

SEOUL (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin Friday said long-range Scud missiles being developed in North Korea with Iranian money were a particular threat to Israeli civilians and to an overall Middle East peace.

Mr. Rabin, who had an unscheduled breakfast meeting with South Korean President Kim Young-Sam, told a news conference North Korea had already supplied Syria and Iran with shorter-range Scud C missiles, launchers and the technology to produce them.

"In addition," he said, "Iran spends hundreds of millions of dollars in North Korea for the development of longer-range ground-to-ground missiles, the kind of missiles that can be launched from Iran to reach targets in Israel."

"It might be that North Korea is also involved in proliferation of mass destruction weapons to others," Mr. Rabin said on the penultimate day of a four-day visit to South Korea, the first by an Israeli prime minister.

"We see this act of North Korea as endangering the tranquility, the stability and peace in the Middle East," he said, adding: "I hope the international community will be able to cope with these unreasonable, dangerous acts of North Korea."

The United States and other Western countries suspect North Korea used its atomic energy programme to develop nuclear arms, something Pyongyang denies. Western intelligence agencies also believe the secretive Stalinist north has a large stockpile of chemical and biological weapons.

In October, Washington and Pyongyang reached an agreement to replace North Korea's financial package due from the EU since 1981.

Athens, a long-time rival of Turkey, has said it cannot agree the customs union while Turkish troops are still on the divided island of Cyprus.

Geagea trial postponed

BEIRUT (AP) — The trial of a former Christian warlord in the murder of a rival politician resumed Friday but was quickly adjourned after the remaining defence lawyers withdrew from court.

Chief Justice Philip Khairallah put off until Jan. 6, 1995, the trial of Samir Geagea, former commander of the Lebanese Forces Christian militia, in the murder of Dany Chamoun, his wife and two young sons in October 1990.

The postponement came after the last three lawyers defending Mr. Geagea boycotted the trial in solidarity

with 117 other defence attorneys who walked out of the courtroom last week.

The large number of attorneys appears to be intended as a demonstration of strength.

In last week's session, the five-man judicial council rejected a defence demand to move Mr. Geagea from detention at the defence ministry prison to a civilian jail.

Mr. Geagea, 43, who led the largest Christian militia during the 1975-90 civil war until it was disbanded in 1991, has alleged mistreatment at the defence ministry facility.

His lawyers have set Mr. Geagea's removal from the defence ministry as a condition for returning to the courtroom. Mr. Geagea said he supported such a move and would not accept other lawyers to defend him.

Mr. Geagea's separate trial in the bombing of a church in February in which 11 people died and 60 were wounded was to resume as scheduled on Saturday.

It is the first trial of a senior civil war figure and underlines governments' efforts to restore fully its authority over the country.

Gulf foreign ministers to draft summit agenda

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AFP) — Foreign ministers from six Gulf states are to draw up an agenda in Bahrain on Saturday ahead of a summit.

The 15th summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is due to open in Manama Monday.

Foreign ministers meeting Saturday "will look at a large range of questions concerning the Middle East peace process, the situation in the Gulf after Iraq's recognition of Kuwait and the links between the GCC countries," said a council spokesman.

The GCC countries — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Bahrain — decided in September to ease their boycott imposed on Israel since 1948.

The ministers will also discuss ways of boosting their joint force the Peninsula Shield based in Saudi Arabia.

They want to increase the force from the current 4,000 troops to 25,000 men.

The symbolic force created in 1984 proved incapable of driving back Iraqi forces when they invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Four of the six states have also signed a joint security accord, but Kuwait has refused to initial it until it has been approved by parliament. And Qatar boycotted a meeting of interior ministers in Riyadh to protest Saudi attacks on its territory.

After their talks, the foreign ministers will pass on "their perceptions and recommendations" to their heads of state, the GCC secretary said.

Majali dissolves Al Ahd central council, freezes membership

By Khalil Abdul Salam Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN (J.T.) — The chief of Al Ahd Party, Abdul Hadi Majali, Friday belittled the importance of news reports of mass resignations from his party ranks. He charged that most of the names carried by the local press were fake and have no relation whatsoever to his party.

Speaking at a press conference here, Mr. Majali accused what he called "elements inside and outside the party" of conspiring to destroy what he called the "party's strong base at the national level." He labelled those elements as "envious opportunists."

Newspapers on Thursday and Friday carried the 16 names of presumably party members from Ajloun branch, who had resigned.

Mr. Majali charged that his party's stands have prompted "party enemies to accuse it of factionalism and sectarianism."

Answering to accusations by outgoing members that decisions within the party were taken unilaterally and without consultation, Mr. Majali said the party's decision to support the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty was adopted unanimously by the party's political bureau.

He said the party leadership had discussed the treaty with the cadres in the various parts of the King-

dom. Mr. Majali said that the centrist party was reconsidering party membership after it had established that the number of party members was never indicative of the party's strength. He noted that the party had made a mistake by accepting more members in order to increase the "number at the expense of quality."

He said that party general elections will be held in the first quarter of 1995 to elect members to the central council, politburo and branches' leaderships. Mr. Majali announced the freezing of membership and the dissolution of the party's central council. On government-party relations, Mr. Majali said the government is not obliged to discuss the peace treaty with the parties. Parties should only be able to discuss the treaty through their representatives in the Lower House of Parliament.

Mr. Majali said he saw no Jordanian-Palestinian differences over the issue of Jerusalem. He stressed that Jordan had always sought to reaffirm the Palestinian identity of Jerusalem. However, he said, the Palestinian leadership did not have an unanimous agreement on this. He noted that "certain Arab countries are searching for a role to play in the future, and that is why they are now raising this issue and trying to marginalise Jordan's role."

Column 8

Lung cancer danger 'stays with ex-smokers'

LONDON (R) — People who gave up smoking years ago could remain eight times more likely to develop lung cancer than people who never smoked, according to research published Wednesday. Dr. Mohammad Munavvar from the British Thoracic Society (BTS) said it was previously thought that a smoker who had given up for 10 years faced the same risk of lung cancer as a non-smoker.

"That is clearly disproved here," he told Reuters. "Even after 20 years, the risk is higher in an ex-smoker than in a non-smoker, but much, much lower than that in current smokers." Doctors at Hope Hospital in Salford, northwestern England, looked at the smoking history of 274 patients found to have a visible tumour in the central airways of the lungs. Fifty-five per cent of these cancer cases were current cigarette smokers, 38 per cent were ex-smokers and only two per cent were non-smokers. Of the ex-smokers, 12 per cent had given up at least 10 years ago. "Smokers should not kid themselves that it is OK to carry on smoking until they're 30 or 40-something and then quit," said Dr. Ronan O'Driscoll, also from the BTS. "The risk never goes away completely."

"Our message is prevention is better than cure. We must stop the tobacco industry enticing our children to start smoking in the first place," he added.

Peru's estranged first couple to call it quits

LIMA (AFP) — After a public falling-out with all the rollercoaster drama of a soap opera, Susana Higuchi de Fujimori has announced she was filing for divorce from President Alberto Fujimori. "Yes, it's true," Mrs. Higuchi told local reporters when asked about rumours she would seek a civil divorce after earlier maintaining she would not because she is a practicing Roman Catholic. Mrs. Higuchi, whom the president stripped of her ceremonial role as first lady earlier in the year, also said she would ask the Vatican for an annulment of their 24-year marriage. She said her lawyers would begin proceedings simultaneously before court authorities and church officials. Mrs. Higuchi has criticised her husband's political priorities, saying he was not making poverty a big enough issue in a country in which one half the population of 22 million lives below the poverty level. The first couple's marital woes began to rock the media here Aug. 3 when Mrs. Higuchi charged that Mr. Fujimori's political allies in the legislature passed a law to bar relatives of the president from seeking public office to keep her out of the political picture. A construction engineer by training, Mrs. Higuchi later tried unsuccessfully to register to run for president in the April 1995 election against her husband. She then fired back by making specific corruption allegations about government advisers and presidential ministers, which prompted Mr. Fujimori to end her ceremonial duties as first lady. After announcing her divorce plans, Mrs. Higuchi reiterated her charges that official corruption in Fujimori's government was rife.

Lottery millionaire cannot even give it away

LONDON (AFP) — A Muslim charity has refused a donation of more than £1 million (\$1.5 million) from the winner of the British National Lottery's £17.8 million jackpot, said Friday's Daily Mail. Close friends of the winner said he had decided to give at least £1 million to the Islamic Relief Charity and £200,000 (\$300,000) for the building of a community centre next to the Masjid Al Momineen Mosque in Blackburn, northern England, where he lives, said the paper. But Islamic Relief accused the 41-year-old father of three, who has not been named, of setting a bad example to Muslims by defying strictures on gambling in the Koran. "He has done wrong. There is no pleasure in a donation like this. We cannot accept it," fundraiser Ashfaq Burundikar was quoted as saying.

Greece, human rights derail EU-Turkey pact

BRUSSELS (R) — Turkey's chances of sealing a customs union with the European Union (EU) next week have foundered on Greek objections and rising European anger over the jailing of Kurdish parliamentarians.

EU officials say a meeting scheduled for Monday between EU foreign ministers and Turkish officials is not expected to result in any concrete progress on the pact and may not even take place.

"If the (Turks) come, they will go away empty-handed having heard about human rights," one EU diplomat said.

"The Greeks would clearly like (the meeting) to be cancelled," he added, noting some previous meetings had been scratched.

Even if the meeting does take place, it will be held following a barrage of complaints by European leaders about Turkey's human rights record, notably the jailing of the Kurdish parliamentarians.

They were jailed last week for alleged support of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has waged a 10-year battle for control of the largely Kurdish southeast.

The EU and Turkey have been negotiating an agreement that would bring Turkey closer to the EU than any country outside Norway and Iceland, which are linked through the free trade European economic area.

It calls for Turkey to remove external tariffs on EU goods, set its third-country tariffs at the same rate as the EU does and accept preferential agreements with other countries that the EU has negotiated.

In exchange, Turkey would get access to the huge EU market in most sectors other than agriculture and services. Greece, however, has blocked agreement both on the pact and on a 600 million European currency unit

needed for the King to stay on after delivering his address.

In any way, the King had another commitment on his schedule, and he left in order to meet that commitment.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, Friday quoted Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres as expressing Israeli support for Jordan's role in Jerusalem's holy places.

Petra said Mr. Peres had told journalists Thursday that Israel's position was based on respect for the present status quo under which Jordan plays the role of guardian of the holy places. Mr. Peres said that Israel would not change that situation, Petra reported.

The Agency also quoted Mr. Peres as saying that the Palestinians also have the right to keep their civil institutions in the city and that they would continue to enjoy the same right they have at the moment.

Majali: Jordan will continue custodianship

(Continued from page 1)

al. These meetings, Dr. Majali said, were good indications that there was less tension between Jordan and the Gulf countries.

Asked about Mr. Arafat's visit to Jordan, the Prime Minister said there was nothing new in this regard.

Asked to name the parties responsible for obstructing the mention of Jordan's role in the resolutions, the prime minister said he could not accuse any party. He said, though, that the resolutions were normally worked out by the conference's general secretariat and a preparatory committee comprising foreign ministers.

Asked why the King had left Morocco before the summit ended on Thursday, the prime minister said that since the conference was only scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday there was no

French activist to defend Israeli-held prisoners

By Haitham Haddadin

Reuters

BEIRUT — The families of 250 prisoners held in a notorious Israeli-controlled jail in South Lebanon have delegated the head of France's human rights commission to seek information about them and fight for their release.

"Our hopes are pinned on you," Kifah Dabajeh told Monique Picard Weyl, carrying a photograph of his brother Rafik who he said has been held in Khiam prison in Israel's occupation zone since 1985.

Israel allows no inspections of the jail, where suspected Lebanese and Palestinian guerrillas are held. The Dabajeh family has had no word of Kifah for six years, Rafik said.

Ms. Weyl, who is on a week-long visit to Lebanon, says she is determined to publicise the issue of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners in Khiam and of about 50 Lebanese prisoners in Israel.

Relatives of the Lebanese held in Israel said they also want her help. Some 150 mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers of prisoners — some in tears — told the French lawyer at a meeting on Thursday they wanted her to take up their cases and bring them news if she visits Khiam and Israeli jails.

Khiam is run by the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia but Israel, which has 1,000 troops in the 13-km wide occupation zone, has ultimate control of the jail and everything else in the zone.

"Israel has forbidden us to get any news of Rafik for six years... every time our hopes rose in the past they were dashed again. We hope that you don't travel back home and we see our hopes dashed again," Mr. Dabajeh told Ms. Weyl.

Ms. Weyl promised to contact Israeli officials when she returned to France to get them to get her permission from SLA chief General Antoine Lahd to enter Khiam, which she calls a Nazi-style concentration camp.

She says it is closed to outside inspection and she has been refused entry both by the SLA and the Israelis, and that according to former captives many inmates are blind, lose limbs, ears and eyes and are sick.

A Khiam prisoner named Selim Awada died a week ago at the American University hospital in Beirut, four days after being released, Ms. Weyl said.

"There should be talk about the oppression befalling these detainees," she said.

Former prisoners told her of their plight inside Khiam.

"They used to torture us with electricity, cold water, beatings with whips and by psychological means like threat of rape," Kifah Afifi, a 23-year-old Palestinian woman, said.

"There was hardly any medical treatment for the sick."

Ms. Afifi said she was released three months ago

after six years in Khiam for taking part in a failed raid by Palestinian guerrillas in the Israeli-held zone. She said 10 women remain in Khiam.

"The suffering inside is great. No words can express it," Sahar Zayter, released two years ago, said.

"We suffered a lot and those who remain inside suffer from physical and psychological torture," Ms. Zayter added.

Mohammad Safa, head of the follow-up committee for the support of the Lebanese detainees in Israeli prisons, told the families they can fill out forms next week officially authorising Ms. Weyl to defend their sons.

The forms would be sent to Ms. Weyl in France through the Lebanese foreign ministry, Ms. Safa said.